

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-1
January 27, 2026
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro (Absent)
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Arts and Cultural Coordinator, Catherine Cathers

Public Speaker(s)

George Navarro
Jose Antonio Viscarondo

Agenda Item G-1 [Start: 12:34 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission approving the concept, commissioning, and donation of a work of public art by Alicja Kwade in conjunction with the development project at 103 Sevilla / 130 Almeria, in fulfillment of the Art in Public Places requirement for public art in private development (unanimously recommended by the Arts Advisory Panel approval/denial vote: 8 to 0; unanimously recommended by the Cultural Development Board approval/denial vote: 4 to 0).

Mayor Lago: Time certain item G-1.

City Attorney Suarez: G-1 is a resolution of the City Commission approving the concept commissioning and donation of a work of public art by Alicja Kwade in conjunction with the
City Commission Meeting

development project at 103 Sevilla, 130 Almeria in fulfillment of the Art in Public Places requirement for public art and private development. That was it.

Mayor Lago: Good afternoon.

Arts and Culture Coordinator: Good afternoon, Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, Catherine Cathers, Arts and Culture Coordinator for this city. So, we do have a presentation. The developers of 103 Sevilla and 130 Almeria Avenue are with us today with a petition waiver request for the Art in Public Places fee requirement. So, I would like to bring up Jose Antonio Viscarondo and George Navarro who are representing the project and will discuss details about the proposal and then I'll come back up and talk about the city side.

Mr. George Navarro: Good morning, Commissioners, Mr. Mayor, George Navarro with offices at 333 Southeast 2nd Avenue. I'm here this morning with my client, Jose Antonio Viscarondo. We're back before you to present the public artwork that we've selected for the 130 Almeria project. And as you may recall, last year, we worked closely with this Commission to create a 12,500 square foot public park in downtown that will be fully constructed at the owner's expense and dedicated to the city. This includes a new playground, new passive landscape areas, hardscape, lighting. It's going to be a beautiful park and we're very excited. And one of the things that we discussed at the time was the importance of pairing this park with a world-class sculpture to create a centerpiece for this new public space. And I think as you will see today that that's exactly what we've been able to achieve. So, with that, I'd like to introduce Jose who could present the artwork from our artist, Alicja Kwade, who's an internationally recognized contemporary artist who has exhibitions in all the major museums and public spaces around the world.

Jose Antonio Viscarondo: Thank you, Mayor, Vice Mayor, members of the Commission, thank you for having me once more again to discuss what's part of this project. I appreciate you guys' patience with all the time that we have taken from you guys on in reference to the project. So, the proposed artwork's name is... So, as Jorge mentioned, it's Alicja Kwade. She's a Polish artist represented by Pace Gallery. The work is called the Ordo Du Monde. It's a unique piece, part of her Totem series. The artwork explores the relationship between human existence and the universe. She used reference to Piero Mazzoni's Suclot du Monde, which is the base of the world, which literally inverts the notion of what supports the world. So, in a similar way, this sculpture asks viewers to reconsider assumptions about power, scale, and perspective. And the artist was able to describe it in her work by using items that are of human form and using representations of worlds or planets. As Jorge mentioned, the artist is a recognized contemporary artist. Her public works had been installed in major cities. As Jorge mentioned, the Venice Biennale in Bedouin Paris, in New York has representations in Storm King Art Center and the Metropolitan, as well as Hong Kong Bay as part of a public art pieces similar to what we are doing in Coral Gables. The proposed materials of the work are bronze and natural stone. Both of these materials have been used for

City Commission Meeting

[Date]

2

January 27, 2026

*Agenda Item G-1 – Resolution approving the concept, commissioning and donation of a work of public art
By Alicja Kwade in connection with the development project at 103 Sevilla / 130 Almeria*

centuries, millennia, and it's represented in civic artworks in major cities. And some examples of those we can put as the highlight as Michelangelo's David and other ancient Roman bronzes. The location and, sorry, this got a little messed up on the organization. So, the art piece is 23 feet tall and it's going to be set on a plinth that's five feet. It's going to be located as part of a park. So, the park that we're donating is in the corner of Galiano and Sevilla. The art piece is being made a focal point of the open lawn that we're doing on the park. So, what we're trying to bring in is have the piece be part of like the predominant highlight of the park. So, the goal of the artwork as it's aligning to the City of Coral Gables is we wanted to create a recognizable landscape, provoke thought through engagement and offer work that can resonate throughout generations. The familiarity of the form of the chair is going to make the work accessible while the cosmic symbolism of the planets invites a deeper reflection into when gazing at the park. The artist selection process was done throughout the assistance of all the boards. We have Marcus Art Foundation assist us in contacting the gallery. It was done through Pace Gallery. Pace is a leading international art gallery. Established in the 1960s and the notable artists that it represents are Calder, Dubuffet and between others. The scope of the work, our donation is around, as per the ordinances of the city is supposed to be around \$390,000. What we're proposing is this art piece, the art piece exceeds a little bit on the cost of what the donation needs to be. So only the art piece is costing 450 plus the installation, the shipping and the other accountable costs that we have on the project. So, the total budget roughly is estimated to be around 470, \$480,000. The schedule, this art hasn't been commissioned yet, waiting for your approval. The approval will take – the commission should take around six months. As part of our previous resolution and agreement with the city and the donation of the park, the building will receive a TCO in parallel with the building. So, the art piece will be staggered into the final times of the construction when the park is completed. So, we're roughly estimating a construction time in between 20 and 22 months. The art will be installed towards the end to prevent any damage being done to the art piece. The plant maintenance as per the artist and some other conservatory guidance that we received is its bronze and natural stone. So, these are highly durable and exposed to the elements. It requires periodic cleaning and some waxing being done on the bronze.

Mr. Navarro: Thank you, Jose. So, as you see, we're very careful in selecting this artist. Your code requires for the artwork contribution to either be paid as a monetary payment into your public art fund or to be commissioned. And we've selected to move forward with commissioning the artwork. In this case, the artwork, as Jose mentioned, far exceeds the amount that's required. This is someone who truly cares about art. And we saw this as an opportunity to really deliver something meaningful and lasting to the city. And the city has done an amazing job over the years of securing major artwork for its public art collection. It's become a national leader in integrating high quality public art into public spaces. And we want to continue this legacy. One of the things we did is select an artist who really understands the exposure of artwork to the elements. So, we expect maintenance to be minimal. One of the things that's standardly done when you are commissioning

City Commission Meeting

artwork and dedicating it to the city, in this case, it will be part of the park, which we'll be dedicating to the city that they'll be maintaining. The city typically requires a 10 percent maintenance fee to be provided. In this case, in light of the public park, and because we are far exceeding that amount and want to truly do something extraordinary, we're asking for some flexibility to be able to deliver that. We would ask for the condition for the 10 percent maintenance fee to be waived in this case. So, we could go ahead and do something far more greater than what otherwise would be possible. So, we hope you take our consideration of that request. This, I think, is something that will contribute significantly to the city's public art collection. And I think it will be a centerpiece of this park that we all worked closely to deliver to the community. So, thank you.

Arts and Cultural Coordinator: We have a few more slides to complete the presentation. I'll just give the details about the process, the review process. So, this is through section 9-103, waiver of the Art in Public Places fee by donating and installing artwork to the city with an appraised value equal to or greater than the amount of the art in public places fees that would otherwise be required and providing for the perpetual maintenance of such artwork. So as part of the developer's agreement and has stated the green space along Sevilla Avenue is being deeded to the city as a public park where the sculptures proposed for installation and will be donated to the city. The Arts Advisory Panel and the Cultural Development Board voted unanimously to recommend the proposed artwork by Alicja Kwade at their respective meetings on January 7th and January 20th. And I would like to make a special point to acknowledge Jose and his enthusiasm for this project, who has shown up to the meetings and presented on his own behalf for the developer, and it was really great. The Art in Public Places fee as is mentioned is 1 percent of the project's total. It's an aggregate project total as estimated fee that we work off of. The cost of the proposed art piece and the project is approximately \$450,700 for the artwork, plus additional fees for foundation other related expenses. Funds towards the artwork should not replace expenses towards lighting and other infrastructure or hardscaping that would otherwise be designed and part of the project. The artwork and all related expenses will be the responsibility of the developer with any difference in cost which as you mentioned is not expected, but we do have to just note that. If there would be, then it would be paid into the art fund. And as mentioned, developers are required to provide for the perpetual maintenance of the artwork in accordance with our guidelines which is realized typically as a one-time contribution of 10 percent of the value of the artwork that's placed into the public art maintenance fund with the city. Maintenance of the artwork thereafter will be the sole responsibility of the city. The cost of the annual maintenance in this case, we will assess it and determine it upon completion. So, we have not made a determination yet of whether it would be minimal or extraordinary but once it is installed, then we will have that assessed by a conservator. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. First to the applicant. I want to congratulate you on your efforts. You've done a lot of homework. I'm very familiar with this artist. I've seen this artist in

City Commission Meeting

[Date]

4

January 27, 2026

*Agenda Item G-1 – Resolution approving the concept, commissioning and donation of a work of public art
By Alicja Kwade in connection with the development project at 103 Sevilla / 130 Almeria*

multiple museum shows. I've seen this artist in Art Basel represented by Pace, probably one of the top three to four most important galleries in the world. Rothko, Calder, just to name a few. Louis Nevelson, which is an artist who is being considered for purchase here in the City of Coral Gables. It's a beautiful, beautiful work. It also inspires me to see another female artist joining the roster like we've done with Celia Sanchez, like we've done with a litany of artists that have joined the roster here that have been focal points. And it's good to see women and artists get their just due. They're amazing. And for a long time, they were not recognized. So, I think this is a great addition to the city. Something different, beautiful. I think it'll be a talking point. And again, we're continuing to elevate the quality, like you said, showcasing what the City of Coral Gables is all about. I also want to congratulate your business partner, John Marquez from MAP. If you haven't had a chance, I visited this collection multiple times. I wish, I'm disappointed it's not in the City of Coral Gables, but it's in South Florida. So, anybody can see it. It's called MAP Marquez Art Projects. It's an exceptional private collection that is open to the community in line with the Margulies Collection, in line with the Rubel Collection. It is something amazing. He's one of your partners and he's been working alongside with you to ensure that the curation of this artwork is again, something that he's proud to put his name onto. So that's why I always knew that something amazing was going to be forthcoming. In regard to your requests, I'm in support and I'll tell you why. I want to have individuals who are bringing forth projects make a very quick decision. Either you stroke a check to the Art and Public Places Fund, which I recommend that every developer do, so that we can purchase works like Frank Stella, like Luis Nevelson, like Celia Sanchez. Amazing, amazing works. First-class works. Or if you want to go through the project like, you know, through the gymnastics like you've done, I feel like we're in good hands when a person of your caliber and your knowledge is going to step up and do this because it's a sense of pride. You're not going to build a beautiful building and then put a piece of artwork that you're not going to be satisfied with. Case in point, I'm very proud of my no vote on the project on Ponce, which looks like you're in Disney World. It's horrific. The works, when you get to near 8th Street, I think is an abomination. It should be removed and scrapped. It actually takes away; it actually takes away at the collection's value and that was \$500,000. I was very clear on that. And I said, "Don't vote for it. My colleagues voted for it. What can you do for it? But this is a step in the right direction. So when you're telling me that you want to save 10 percent on, I think it's around \$40,000, but you're willing to invest \$100,000 for a better work of art, as long as all the appraisals are in place and I know what the value of this work is, I don't have any issues with that, but I'm not changing the law. I want to do it a case by case. Case by case. I want to leave the requirements in place. And I want to make sure that if someone is coming to me and saying, I'm willing to spend \$500,000, \$200,000. Case in point, the Vonspan, I think we spent more money on that work. You know, we'll consider it. We'll consider it. Something that I'd be remiss if I didn't put it on the record. Another thing that I'm very proud of was that you allowed me to negotiate with you so that we could build a park here in this location. Just like I did with Publix and just like I did with Manny Cadre and

City Commission Meeting

[Date]

5

January 27, 2026

*Agenda Item G-1 – Resolution approving the concept, commissioning and donation of a work of public art
By Alicja Kwade in connection with the development project at 103 Sevilla / 130 Almeria*

his partner. These three parks are going to be anchors in the City of Coral Gables. They're going to transform our city. It's going to have world-class art and it's going to be a true meeting place for people, for community to be built. So, I want to thank you for committing to give up a piece of property that's worth millions and millions of dollars in our downtown. And you know, that's not easy. And I am grateful for the both of you for negotiating with me. For negotiating to give up that property and to stepping up in regard to the art. So, I'm in favor of your request and I'm in favor of the artwork. I think it's beautiful.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes, ma'am.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, Ms. Cathers, you can correct me if I'm wrong. Someone pays the one-time fee into the Art in Public Places Fund. They don't pay for the maintenance of whatever.

Arts and Cultural Coordinator: It goes into the art fund. So, there's a certain amount that may be used towards extraordinary maintenance in the future. So, the funds are allocated for different things.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So -- but there's no additional monies that they pay over and above the artwork money.

Arts and Cultural Coordinator: No.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, I'm in favor for that reason, you know, because more was spent here. I do have a request to the City Manager and that is just to look, make sure that structurally, you know, we're not going to get strong enough to withstand the hurricane force winds as much as reasonable. Imagine there can be a piece of structure put through the center to provide that support that's needed. That's my only request.

Commissioner Fernandez: Through the Mayor. I think it's a great art piece. I was just speaking about you during the last item. I don't think you guys were listening when I was mentioning it, but it shows that your commitment is to this community and to improving Coral Gables. It's not just about, you know, creating a project and moving on. You have a commitment to this community and we appreciate that. I agree with the Mayor. I think you're elevating the artwork that you're bringing in. So, it's a no-brainer. I do have a question for the Mayor though, because Catherine said that there isn't additional monies requested for maintenance when the developer's just putting money aside. Are we factoring in that additional 10 percent when we're asking for the contribution?

Mayor Lago: Let me tell you the way I see it here on this item. This is just a one-time item. I'm looking at it as a calculation. If it's 10 percent of the value of the art, and this time it will be \$40,000, right? He's willing to give me \$100,000 additional. So, we can do it if, I'm just saying, if this

City Commission Meeting

Commission wants the maintenance fee of \$40,000, perfect, they'll reduce the size of the artwork. This is the way that artwork works. The smaller it gets, obviously the cheaper it is. So, we're going to go from 23 feet to let's say, I'm just making up a number, okay? 15 feet for the artwork. And then it'll reduce it by \$100,000. You have a smaller artwork, and then they can just tag on the \$40,000 for the maintenance. I personally would rather say, let's put the bill for the maintenance ourselves when we have to do maintenance, let's say in 10 years or 15 years, but get a work that's more monumental because that's what we did with Frank Stella. Remember, we started with Frank Stella at one point with something million, and we ended up at a work that's over \$2 million. So, it's just giving you an idea of the way that my thought is different, actually.

Commissioner Fernandez: My thought is about the legislation that you created. Does it factor in maintenance for the developers that are just putting money aside, or are we not factoring in an additional 10 percent? Because then if you think about it, they're getting off easy because a developer who's actually putting forward the artwork and is putting in the additional 10 percent for maintenance is going above and beyond in comparison to the ones that are just putting money aside. If they're not putting aside an additional 10 percent, that would be factored in for maintenance that we as a city would purchase.

Mayor Lago: I never contemplated that, but I'd love to know what the director's position is.

Arts and Culture Coordinator: Yes, just to clarify. So, if they're paying the fee, they're paying a fee, right? All those funds go into our art fund. So out of those funds, we are paying for artwork, we're paying for maintenance, we're paying for a variety of expenses. So, if the private developer is purchasing and installing artwork on their own property, they are responsible for the maintenance of it. So, they are not being asked to do addition because they're already taking that on. So, this is a donated artwork that otherwise we would not be maintaining.

Commissioner Fernandez: Right, so I guess the answer to the question is no, because if they're required \$390,000, they're technically required \$429,000, whereas a developer who's just putting the money aside is just being required the \$390,000. Maybe that's something that we can work on the legislation to strengthen that legislation to require it to be the 429 going forward to ensure that a developer who's going forward and buying the artwork isn't paying more than one who's just putting the money aside and allowing the city to utilize.

Mayor Lago: Just even the playing field.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yeah, exactly.

Arts and Culture Coordinator: So, and then we can update if that's the will of the Commission, we can update the resolution for this particular piece too.

Commissioner Fernandez: I'll be happy to move that part.

Commissioner Lara: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes, sir.

Commissioner Lara: So, this is a counter view, right? A counter view. I also want to discuss what's before us right now, this particular resolution. But as a counter view to your point, which is well taken Commissioner Fernandez, I mean, if I understand this correctly, right? So, the developer who has the pride and has the interest in putting forth a beautiful development, ensures its rapid sale at market prices, right? I can see the incentive in wanting to put a world-class piece of art there. And the financial wherewithal and the generosity, take your pick of which term you want to use, will drive the decision as to what that project will look like. On the other hand, when you're putting in just the funding, it's just the cash portion in lieu of putting in the artwork, it gives to the city the discretion on how to use that money. So, to the city, there would be a benefit. I don't know how, and I'm not going to attempt to quantify it, right? But there is a benefit to be able to utilize this cash as it sees best in terms of how to choose art it wishes to purchase, right? Relinquished that from the developer who could have chosen it themselves. But even the developer who chooses it themselves is subject to the Commission, or I should say the majority of the Commission deciding it doesn't want that art. It didn't happen in that case in the Lowe's example, right? But the developer really wanted that, as you said, the Disney World look would have been disappointed if it would have been today's Commission, right? So, I think there's a give and take is what I'm trying to say. Whether there's some tweaking that you need to do, but you heard it here first, right? That like we got a Commissioner here looking out for the interests of the developer. I like that, you know? That's the first for everything saying we want an even playing field for the developers. So, I don't know that we're ready necessarily right now to amend or make changes to the current resolution. I'd like to say that on that score, I think it's a beautiful piece of art. I really, really love it. It looks great. And I really like to see it as part of the finished development in the park that's being donated. I think it elevates in all respects not only the project, but all those who live, work around it or travel through it as tourists. So yeah, you have my support for that as the resolution is currently comprised.

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: So, Commissioner Fernandez, as far as what the sentiments are in Tallahassee, we should not be increasing impact fees and costs for developers. So, I would caution you against bringing that suggestion at this time. So, I think it would have more of a negative effect than a positive effect.

Mayor Lago: Okay, so we have a motion. Do we have a second?

City Commission Meeting

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll second.

City Attorney Suarez: So, Mayor, just to clarify, does the motion include the amendment to waive the 10 percent maintenance fee?

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes.

Commissioner Lara: Yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes.

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes.

Mayor Lago. We have no public comment. We're good? Yes. Thank you very much.

Arts and Cultural Coordinator: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Jose Antonio Viscarondo: I want to say a few words.

Mayor Lago: Of course.

Jose Antonio Viscarondo: I want to thank this Commission and your staff. You guys have been wonderful to work with. This has not been an easy project. This project has evolved so many instances. But the project has evolved in something that has become more emotional for us. You know, we're first-generation Venezuelan immigrants into this community. For us, it's allowed us to really define the roots of what makes this community and has allowed our family, so this is a legacy for us. Having this park as part of our project, it cements our legacy and our future generations in here. So, for us, it's something that has represented so much more. It started as a residential project, and it's become something that has moved a lot of things. That's part of why we wanted the art piece too. It's another little niche of something that we believe in, in contemporary art. That making this mark and making this place a landmark for future generations to enjoy in this community and it allows our families to throw full roots on this community. So we are, as one of the Commissions mentioned, we are committed to improving this city where we are and seeing grow into the beautiful city it has been, and we think it will continue to become. And I want to thank you all. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you. I appreciate you. Thank you.

