

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-3
July 9, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena
Commissioner Jorge Fors**

City Staff

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
Assistant City Attorney, Naomi Levi-Garcia
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Historic Preservation Officer, Dona Spain**

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item G-3 [0:00:00 p.m.]

A Resolution amending Resolution No. 2015-272, increasing the Arts Advisory Panel membership from seven to nine members and setting forth membership requirements for the two new members.

(Sponsored by Mayor Valdes-Fauli)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, G-3. G-3, a resolution amending -- increasing the Arts Advisory Panel membership from seven to nine. And I'm glad that I have brought this at this point because this discussion shows the problems we have with choosing art by people who have never chosen art in their lives. We have a letter here from the Chair of the Arts Advisory Panel -- acting Chair

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Jill Deupi, a three-page letter, which I would like for the City Clerk to enter into the record. But the people that have chosen this art that we have turned down now -- temporarily maybe, but we have turned down -- are people that have never chosen art in their lives. And Ms. Deupi, who is the director of the Lowe Art Museum -- and a very, very good person -- says -- and talks to us about the qualifications for membership in the Arts Advisory Panel and she talks about profound understanding of the broader context, which is required to properly install, present, interpret and maintain works of art. But nowhere do we have anyone here that has ever bought or installed a work of art in their building, home, et cetera, et cetera. I met with Ms. Deupi for lunch last week, I think it was. And she said that she's afraid that collectors would choose art for Coral Gables in order to promote their artists, which I think is a little offensive to Armando Codina, Jorge Perez, Manny Cadre, Mike Fernandez, Rose Ellen Greene, et cetera, et cetera. I don't think that they would foist art on us in order to improve their collections. What I suggest at this point -- as opposed to what I was suggesting before -- is that we add two collectors to be chosen by the Commission, upon the recommendation of the City Manager or one of us, to the committee, people who have experience, who have the taste to have acquired art and to have the vision to have acquired art that they want, whether it's in the City or in their buildings or in their museums, et cetera, et cetera. My proposal would be to add two new members to the Arts Advisory Panel, members who are not technicians in preservation, in history, in whatever, people who have chosen art in the past. And that would be my proposal.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I would just like to say, just as a clarification of the Arts Advisory Panel members, that two of those members are actually part of the County's selection of art, so they have...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I don't care what they...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Selected art.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: They may be art cleaners, for all I'm concerned. Okay, they are, but I would like to add two collectors who live in Coral Gables, chosen by us, to that panel.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Good afternoon, Commissioners. Just to clarify, this resolution does add two additional members to the Arts Advisory Panel. They would be required to be residents...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Residents.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Appointed by the Commission as a whole. And we actually didn't include the collector criteria. We just left it up to the Commission that in your discretion...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You leave that up to the Commission as opposed to leaving it to...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Yes.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Dona, who I respect very much or the committee itself, who will choose a conservator, a restorer, a whatever it is that have never chosen a piece of art.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Before you is -- doesn't qualify who those two should be. That would be up to you. It leaves it open. So, if you want to put collectors, you can. But if you can't find one that's willing to serve, you can put someone else.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That's correct. Right. Do I hear a motion, please?

Commissioner Keon: Could you join after November?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: We can have a discussion at some other time.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Who has a collection?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I have a collection.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I know you have...

Commissioner Keon: She does have a collection.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: A beautiful collection of historic prints and whatever.

Vice Mayor Lago: I'll make the motion.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Second? Second?

Commissioner Fors: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Will you call the roll, please?

City Clerk Urquia: Commissioner Mena?

Vice Mayor Lago: Any thoughts on the issue or...

Commissioner Keon: You know, it's hard for me to believe that the people that are collectors that you're talking about are -- but we'll see. I mean, if they're willing to come and sit and...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Commissioner Keon: And do that, you know. They travel a lot, whatever.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: If they can't, they will be fired, like every other member of every other committee.

Commissioner Keon: Pardon me? Then they'll be...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: If they can't, they will not accept and...

Commissioner Keon: They'll be diverted or whatever.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay. Will you call the roll, please?

City Clerk Urquia: Commissioner Mena?

Commissioner Mena: Yeah, I have a question, sorry. Do you have any concerns about this?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I do.

Commissioner Mena: Which are?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I...

Commissioner Mena: Pretty much what's in the letter?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: Right?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I have concern and I think that we should leave it up to the art professionals. I -- my...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: When we were here...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE)...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Mr. Mayor, please. When I was here the last time, I really felt as if this was a compromise that would help the Mayor because he did not want to have professionals at all on this board when we first started out on this. So, I thought that that might be acceptable. When it was taken back to the Arts Advisory Panel, they were still very upset about it, and I have to respect their opinions. These people are knowledgeable in the field. So, I would defer to their opinion on this. I mean, that's my view on it, you know.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: They -- the Arts Advisory Panel turned down the work of Carlos Cruz Diaz, a world-renowned artist who has worked everywhere...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: They turned him down...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Because it was going -- it may...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: To be permanent.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Cost \$18,000.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: That is not why they turned it down.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Well, that's the excuse we were given.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: You can talk about that, sir.

Vice Mayor Lago: No, no. Let me ask...

Commissioner Mena: Why did they turn it down?

Vice Mayor Lago: Maintenance.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Well, first they were concerned that it was an infinite amount of money to be spent by the City. But the main reason they turned that down is that we were trying to turn a temporary piece of art into a permanent installation, and that would be fraught with all kinds of issues, which we're having now, and we haven't been able to get a signed agreement.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, we have. We have. Dona, we have.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: We (INAUDIBLE) since...

Commissioner Keon: We don't have a signed agreement, do we?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: We do not have a signed agreement, yet.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have an agreement by the City Attorney...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: So, you know...

Vice Mayor Lago: So, if you...

Commissioner Mena: What do we have?

Commissioner Keon: We don't have a signed...

Commissioner Mena: Sorry. I couldn't hear you.

Commissioner Keon: We don't have a signed agreement with Carlos Cruz Diaz's...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: We do not.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We do.

Commissioner Keon: Representative.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The problem is the install...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The signed agreement...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: With the people that do the painting.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: With the painting, and that was the issue that they brought up to begin with. So, I mean, I'm happy to do whatever the Commission wants.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I think that it behooves us to have collectors in this committee as opposed to just technical professionals.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: And again, just to clarify, this doesn't require that the two new appointees be collectors. It would just be up to you all and your discretion.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Up to us, yes.

Assistant City Attorney Levi-Garcia: Right.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Up to us.

Vice Mayor Lago: Dona, let me ask you a question.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Yes, sir.

Vice Mayor Lago: And the majority of the board will be technical experts...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Yes.

Vice Mayor Lago: In their fields.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: That's right.

Vice Mayor Lago: And there's, you know, a good spectrum of professionals on that board. If I was named by the Commission and I wasn't an elected official and I was named to serve on that board, how would you feel about me being on that board?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I would say -- if this wasn't passed?

Vice Mayor Lago: No. If it was passed and I was the person -- I was one of the...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I would be fine with it. But now, I would tell the Mayor or you, if you want to put someone on that...

Vice Mayor Lago: Why would you be fine -- why would you be...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Because it's part of the ordinance and you're allowing that...

Vice Mayor Lago: No, no.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: To go forward.

Vice Mayor Lago: But...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: But now, if you were to ask me if someone who collects art, like Armando Codina or the other wonderful gentlemen that the Mayor said, I would say they should be on the Cultural Development Board because that's the non-professional board that people want to be on. Now, the Mayor doesn't want that because that board does -- deals with those cultural grants and that's a godawful...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That board has grants and that board...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Job.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Has a lot of other things...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: It has a lot of other things to do.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The art development...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: So, that's his...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Chooses art.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: But that's the non-professional board.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll, please?

Vice Mayor Lago: I don't have an issue with it. I mean, personally, I think the majority of them is technical. It's technically trained people who know -- and collectors, I think they bring a different angle and perspective...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll...

Vice Mayor Lago: To the decision process.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. City...

Commissioner Mena: But what is that?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Clerk?

Commissioner Mena: What is that perspective?

Vice Mayor Lago: That's what I'm saying. If I was on that board, would you be concerned, as a collector? I'm not technically trained in art, but...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: But you...

Vice Mayor Lago: You and I have had...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: You are (INAUDIBLE)...

Vice Mayor Lago: You and I have had many discussions in regards to art, and I don't think you would feel that I would be...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I would not.

Vice Mayor Lago: I would...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I think you would be...

Vice Mayor Lago: That I wouldn't be capable to serve on that board. And I'm not...

Commissioner Mena: But that's such a...

Vice Mayor Lago: Technically trained.

Commissioner Mena: Isn't that such a subjective...

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah, it is subjective. Again, but I would look at certain things -- I would look at -- if we're making decisions on a work of art that we'd be purchasing.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: I would look at it for what's in the best interest of the City and what I think is -- would be appropriate for the City.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And that's what I'm looking for.

Vice Mayor Lago: I wouldn't be making the decision based on whatever I have in my collection.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: That's exactly what I'm looking for.

Vice Mayor Lago: I just wouldn't -- I wouldn't be that way.

Commissioner Fors: Ms. Spain, do you think -- I'm looking at the pros and cons of having -- the way I look at it is, by adding two folks who are not necessarily collectors, but I guess you could say laypersons on the board, it brings more diversity of opinion to the board. Do you see any pros in bringing two laypersons who are not necessarily termed technicians?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I don't.

Commissioner Fors: No pros whatsoever?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I have to be honest here. I don't really see any reason to do this. But you know, I answer to the will of the Commission. We will go forward with whatever you all decide.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: We have a wonderful Cultural Development Board that's made up of laypeople that you all put in that are knowledgeable in art, and they just take a recommendation. They don't always go with the Arts Advisory Panel. But they rely on the professionals. They don't even have to have them involved if they don't want to.

Commissioner Mena: You're saying the Cultural Development Board?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: They could just go to the Cultural Development Board and not go to the Arts Advisory Panel.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have our appointees in the Cultural Development Board. We are the City Commission, elected by the people of Coral Gables, and we should have representation on that very, very important board that opines on what we choose and do not choose.

Commissioner Keon: But I think that the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No, we don't.

Commissioner Keon: The Arts Advisory Board serves as a group of people that have expertise in that field.

Commissioner Mena: The technical task.

Commissioner Keon: It's a technical board that...

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Commissioner Keon: Should be -- I mean, there is some element of art as far as choosing what you want that is subjective. But as far as the final materials you use, where they stand up, how they work, you know, all of those sorts of things...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: And experience with that, yes.

Commissioner Keon: And they have experience. You know, maybe, you know -- I don't know if you need to reach further. There is other people that can, you know, do this even better than those we have. But I don't see -- you know, because it's only -- they give you -- it's just like today. You know, they told you what, you know, they do feel is iconic and they're probably right. What they're picking is probably more iconic than, at this moment for that building, for the people that want to use it are ready to accept.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I understand.

Commissioner Keon: So, I mean, I understand that, you know, there becomes a little difference in the thing...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: But that recommendation...

Commissioner Keon: But that's why it comes here.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Went to the Cultural Development Board from the selections committee and then to you.

Commissioner Keon: Okay. So, it comes...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: So, the -- yeah.

Commissioner Keon: It all eventually comes to us.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: It all comes to you, exactly.

Commissioner Keon: So, you can say it may be, but we waive these other factors.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: That's right.

Commissioner Keon: But I want someone -- I do want people that have technical expertise that truly know and understand...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And they're...

Commissioner Keon: Art.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Going to be there. You're just adding two more.

Commissioner Keon: I know, but what...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What is...

Commissioner Keon: What is the value of adding them? What is...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The value of these people...

Commissioner Keon: What do you see the value of two more is?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: These people have chosen art and have bought art in their lives. And the seven members in that committee have never bought a piece of art for -- public art for a city. I want collectors -- two collectors in there appointed by us.

Commissioner Keon: Aren't they -- don't they buy art for their museum?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: No.

Commissioner Keon: They only curate the art? They don't help in the selection of art for their museums?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I would imagine they would.

Commissioner Keon: I would think that they would. I mean, generally, that's, you know, what they do when they advise their museum board as to what they buy and what they bring to the museum. And when you go to, you know, any museum...

Vice Mayor Lago: But Commissioner, anyways...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE).

Vice Mayor Lago: At the end of the day, it's...

Commissioner Keon: I don't know.

Vice Mayor Lago: It's nine positions. Seven of them are going to be technical; two of them are going...

Commissioner Keon: Yeah.

Vice Mayor Lago: To be collectors, so they're going to be outweighed anyways. They're just going to bring a different perspective, just like we have a Commission up here that we may have seven people sitting here, but five of the individuals are the ones that make the decision...

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

Vice Mayor Lago: On behalf of the residents. I'm just saying...

Commissioner Keon: Here nor there.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yeah, it's neither here nor there. So, the technical are seven, the collectors are two.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I would like further...

Vice Mayor Lago: And I would hope -- this is my -- this is what I would hope. I would hope that the two individuals that are chosen by this Commission to represent this Commission would bring a difference of opinion, would bring new artists, would bring their -- you know, their capabilities, their contacts with museums, with galleries, with collections and say, listen, this is what we're seeing all around the world when we travel to different exhibitions or different museums. I think that's a good opportunity.

Commissioner Mena: But doesn't -- I mean...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It is a good opportunity.

Commissioner Mena: That's the part I'm struggling with. I appreciate the objections in the letter. I understand where they're coming from. But if, when push comes to shove, when there's a decision made under this new structure, then it'll be 7-2, right, if there's a...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Right. Right, I understand.

Commissioner Mena: Then -- so what's the...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I mean, you're asking me what...

Commissioner Mena: So, it's like no harm, no foul. You know, what...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Yeah, I think the...

Commissioner Mena: Why?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I think possibly the dynamic on the board will change. I'm not sure if there's going to be that really frank discussion that they have now, but we'll see.

Commissioner Mena: Why?

Commissioner Keon: You don't want to tell somebody that a piece of art is...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I don't -- I'm not sure. I don't know...

Vice Mayor Lago: The dynamics of the Commission...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Because there's collectors.

Vice Mayor Lago: Change every two years.

Commissioner Mena: But doesn't that depend on who the person is?

Vice Mayor Lago: You know, they change every day.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: That's true.

Commissioner Mena: If the...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay, let's...

Commissioner Mena: If the seven change, the dynamic would change...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let's go on.

Commissioner Mena: Too, you know what I mean?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Yeah.

Commissioner Mena: Yeah.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: That is true.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. City Clerk.

Vice Mayor Lago: Do you have anything else?

City Clerk Urquia: Commissioner Mena?

Vice Mayor Lago: Do you have anything else you want to say or no?

Commissioner Mena: Yeah. I'm just frustrated on this one because I don't...

Vice Mayor Lago: Well, go, go.

Commissioner Mena: You know, I don't...

Commissioner Keon: I...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It's 7-2.

Commissioner Keon: I share your opinion.

Commissioner Mena: I'll vote yes, reluctantly.

Commissioner Fors: I'll vote yes. Two out of nine is a good compromise.

Commissioner Keon: You know, I'm voting yes for you because it's your thing. It is out of respect for you, but as long as it...

City Clerk Urquia: Vice Mayor Lago?

Commissioner Keon: Isn't going to make a difference, I'll let it go.

Vice Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Clerk Urquia: Mayor Valdes-Fauli?

Commissioner Keon: Say no.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Go ahead. Say no.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE). I vote yes.

(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: I think we'll be pleasantly surprised.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We will be.

Vice Mayor Lago: I think we'll be pleasantly surprised.