

DRAFT

EXCERPT

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES
CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING
Wednesday, March 15, 2022, 9:00 a.m.
Historical Resources & Cultural Arts Department
Hybrid Meeting & Virtual via Zoom**

MEMBERS	A	M	J	J	J	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	APPOINTED BY:
	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	22	22	22	
Leslie Pantin	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Vince Lago
Frank Martinez	E	E	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	Vice-Mayor Michael Mena
Frank Rodriguez*				P	P	A	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Rhonda Anderson
Ray Corral*				P	P	P	E	P	P	P	E	P	Commissioner Jorge L. Fors Jr.
Jose Valdes-Fauli*				P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez
Dr. Bernice Roth Chair	P	P	P	P	P	P	P	E	P	E	E	P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Geannina Burgos					P	P	E	P	P	P	A	P	Board Appointee

LEGEND: A = Absent; P = Present; V = Virtual; E = Excused; * = New Member; ^= Resigned Member;
- = No Meeting + = Special Meeting

STAFF:

Warren Adams, Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Director
Catherine Cathers, Arts and Culture Specialist

MEETING RECORD / MINUTES PREPARATION: Catherine Cathers, Arts and Culture Specialist,
Historical Resources and Cultural Arts

Dr. Roth called the Cultural Development Board meeting to order at 9:07 a.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

b. JULIO LARRAZ – PROPOSED SCULPTURE ACQUISITION.

Prior to the meeting the Board received materials for a partial-gift proposal from the Julio Larraz Foundation for the monumental artwork *Mars* by the artist, Julio Larraz. Ms. Cathers presented a PowerPoint with an overview of the proposal and began by providing background about the foundation and the artist.

Ms. Cathers stated that the proposal came to the City through Jose Valdes-Fauli in celebration of a retrospective exhibition of the artist's career at the Coral Gables Museum and was initially presented as a broader proposal to the Arts Advisory Panel at the direction of the Cultural Development Board. Last May, she said, the Arts Advisory Panel reviewed the initial submission and recommended a revised proposal responding to the Panel's comments. Ms. Cathers stated that the exhibition, titled "The Kingdom We Carry Inside" opened in December and will be up through April; the proposed piece is one in a series that is currently part of the exhibition. The Arts Advisory Panel reviewed a revised proposal last week, Ms. Cathers reported, and is recommending accepting (the City to fabricate and install) the artwork.

Background about the artist was presented, including that he was born in Cuba and lives and works in Miami. His creative approach was included, and his works noted as being exhibited throughout the world.

Ms. Cathers reviewed details about the proposed acquisition titled *Mars*, saying it is painted bronze and will be the third in an addition of 3 with 2 artist proofs; the estimated time to fabricate the artwork would be about 7 months. Renderings of the artwork were shown along with photographs of the sculpture on site and described as giving the impression of a melon as a juicy Mars-red planet.

The budget was reviewed, including a fabrication quote of \$150,000 and additional estimated expenses for engineering, foundation work, lighting, signage, transportation, etc. totaling an additional \$46,000 that would all come from the Art Fund.

Dr. Roth asked about the maintenance required for the artwork. Ms. Cathers said the recommendation is to wash and wax it annually.

Mr. Valdes-Fauli stated that (the Museum) started working with the (Julio Larraz) Foundation a couple of years ago on the exhibition. He said the (Foundation) initially offered to donate one of his works to the City. He said the Melon (sculpture titled *Mars*) goes for about \$600,000 and the Foundation asked the City to cover fabrication and installation. At the time, he said, the cost of fabrication for this artwork was \$120,000 plus \$10,000 (for transportation). Mr. Valdes-Fauli stated that the Arts Advisory Panel did not make a decision at that time. Ms. Cathers clarified that the proposal had different choices of sculptures; the Panel requested that the Foundation propose one sculpture and address the context of where the work would be sited. She also said they were in favor of the Museum selecting and placing artwork (on the plaza) as part of the exhibition and seeing what the community response would be. Ms. Cathers stated that they (made a motion) recommending a revised proposal, which came back to them in March.

Mr. Valdes-Fauli said the Museum selected the Melon (*Mars*) and placed in on the Museum Plaza. He said it has been a rip-roaring success with people any time of the day stopping to take pictures with it. He continued, saying he was cleared by the City Attorney as having no conflict to present

the proposal to the Arts Advisory Panel, which he did on March 9 and the Panel recommended it for approval. Mr. Valdes-Fauli emphasized that it is a major, popular piece. He explained that the artist fee is being donated and the same work at the Museum is insured for \$600,000.

The Board discussed proposed locations and the importance of it being where people can easily access it. One of the great successes of the piece, Ms. Cathers said, is the urban setting and how people love to walk around it, which was a key element the Panel discussed. She said she was there at night and in the dark people were still taking pictures with it and their families. Ms. Cathers shared initial proposed locations including the City plaza in front of Fritz & Franz at the end of Aragon Avenue, Pittman Park in an opposite corner across from the Jean Ward sculpture, or Ponce Circle Park as a temporary location.

With no further discussion, the following motion was made:

Mr. Rodriguez made a motion recommending accepting the partial gift of a sculpture acquisition through the Julio Larraz Foundation for the sculpture *Mars* by the artist, Julio Larraz. Mr. Valdes-Fauli seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

After voting on the item, the Board continued discussion with Mr. Rodriguez questioning why it took so long when it seems like an obvious (choice). Mr. Valdes-Fauli shared his opinion that some Panel member(s) may have had self-serving interests. Staff reminded the Board that the revised proposal was only recently submitted.

The Board further discussed the location with Mr. Corral noting that wherever it is placed, it should have a similar synergy that is comparable to where the work on loan is now, and where people can really enjoy it. Mr. Pantin mentioned that Pittman Park is close to Giralda Plaza and would be a good location. Board members agreed.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Cathers
Arts & Culture Specialist