

DRAFT

EXCERPT

**CITY OF CORAL GABLES
CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, September 30, 2020, 8:30 a.m.
Historical Resources & Cultural Arts Department
Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

MEMBERS	N +	D +	J	J +	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	S O	APPOINTED BY:
	19	19	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	
Leslie Pantin	P	P	P	P	P	P	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Dr. Fernando Alvarez- Perez	E	P	P	E	P	E	-	-	P	P	P	A	P	Vice-Mayor Vince Lago
Betty Horwitz	P	P	P	P	E	P	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Pat Keon
Frank Martinez	A	P	P	P	E	E	-	-	P	P	P	P	E	Commissioner Michael Mena
Geannina Burgos*									P	P	P	P	P	Commissioner Jorge Fors
Dr. Bernice Roth Chair	P	P	P	P	P	E	-	-	P	P	P	P	P	City Manager Peter Iglesias
Dr. Rosa Maria Mayorga	P	P	P	P	P	P	-	-	P	P	P	E	P	Board Appointee

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

STAFF:

Kara Kautz, Interim Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Director
Catherine Cathers, Arts and Culture Specialist

RECORDING AND PREPARATION OF MINUTES: Catherine Cathers, Arts and Culture Specialist,
Historical Resources and Cultural Arts

Dr. Roth called the Cultural Development Board meeting to order at 8:36 a.m.

NEW BUSINESS:

a. **AIPP WAIVER REQUEST, VILLA VALENCIA – THOMAS HOUSEAGO**

Board members were provided with proposal materials for a waiver request by the Villa Valencia development project to commission and install artwork by Thomas Houseago on the project site. Staff reported that the Arts Advisory Panel reviewed the proposal and made a motion recommending approval to the Cultural Development Board with a requirement that the developer submit specific information regarding the alloy of the material and its treatment. Staff introduced Joanna Davila as representing the developer and Katia Rosenthal as the art consultant on the project.

Ms. Davila, director of marketing for the Villa Valencia project, described the development project at 515 Valencia, stating its location on the corner of Valencia Avenue and Hernando Street with a 9,000 square foot public park. She conveyed the excitement of the development team in proposing a commission by the artist Thomas Houseago, about bringing his work to the City, and contributing to the cultural fabric of Coral Gables. She continued with brief biographical information about the artist and noted his recent exhibition at the Royal Academy of Art, showing images of the artist's past work and in environments similar to the proposed location at Villa Valencia. Ms. Davila stated that the artist works in natural textures and (is known for) figurative and geometric sculptures.

A rendering of the building and park area was shown with the sculpture in place. Mr. Rosenthal expanded on the artist's interest in the human form and stated that the proposed artwork will be made from sheets of brass with different sides that slip in and out of view as one walks around the piece. She noted that the work compliments the aesthetics of the building as well as Coral Gables. Ms. Rosenthal provided information on the foundry in Switzerland responsible for fabricating the artwork, saying it is one of the most renowned in the world. The piece, she said, will be placed on a raised plinth surrounded by a small hedge.

Ms. Davila continued, saying the artwork is six and a half feet tall, with the plinth at a height of about two feet. As an open green space in a residential area of the City, she said the idea is to add interest and welcome people in to have lunch, a picnic, etc. The artwork itself, she said, is a different take on the figure with elegance and sophistication, while also being dynamic. Context images were shown along with magazine and newspaper features about the artist.

Dr. Roth asked about seating within the park and Ms. Davila said there are benches under the pergola.

Ms. Cathers reported that the Arts Advisory Panel (AAP) reviewed another proposed sculpture for the site by the same artist, saying the Panel was divided on whether it was an appropriate piece for the space and City. They were excited about the artist, she said, and encouraged the developer to research another work. The developer returned with the sculpture presented at this time and unanimously recommended it. Ms. Cathers shared the Panel's concerns about the materiality and how it would hold up in the environment and location. She said they also discussed the scale and accessibility to the piece. In response, she continued, Ms. Davila and Ms. Rosenthal provided extensive information about the material and handling and continue to provide information as requested.

Dr. Alvarez-Perez asked if the brass was an artistic or economic choice. Ms. Rosenthal said it is an artistic choice of the artist. He stated that bronze may be a more known material to last over time in our environment. Mr. Rosenthal said it was taken into consideration and noted other works by the artist in the same material that have fared well in similar environments, including a larger work in Hong Kong Bay.

Dr. Alvarez-Perez shared his support of the artist and stated concern about the size, saying he would like to see it larger within this space. Ms. Davila said the landscaping is continuing to be developed and that a higher base would help to see the sculpture at a larger scale. Ms. Rosenthal said she thought the size was contextually appropriate; however, they could ask the artist to scale it a little larger. For comparison, Ms. Cathers asked about the size of the work shown at the Royal Academy of Art. Ms. Rosenthal said that work is a monumental piece. Ms. Davila showed a rendering of the proposed artwork on the base, which would be concrete or stone. Dr. Alvarez-Perez said that presented with other works it may be o.k., but as a

single work in the park, it appears small. Ms. Davila responded that the space is meant to be more intimate and nuanced. Dr. Alvarez-Perez asked if the Panel addressed the scale. Ms. Cathers responded that they discussed it in relation to the surrounding buildings and within the park but did not dwell on it. He noted that the artist's work is well known here in prominent collections and would like to see a more substantial work in Coral Gables.

Ms. Horwitz asked about the maintenance, echoing the concerns of the AAP regarding brass in a tropical environment. Ms. Rosenthal referenced the maintenance documents provided from the fabricator and discussed the alloys being considered. Based on the information provided, she said, oxidation will have no impact on the piece's stability. Ms. Davila added that the studio provided instructions to wipe it with a dry or slightly damp cloth on a regular basis. She said the grounds keepers will be including (this care) as part of their regular duties. The site, she said, also has 24-hour security. Ms. Davila noted that local conservator RLA has recommended more extensive cleaning once or twice a year. Mr. Rosenthal added that a complex hard oil may be rubbed on the surface to protect it from environmental factors.

Ms. Cathers noted that the developer has added a short shrub around the plinth to deter people from touching it. She said the Board should be aware that the sculpture (color and patina) will change over time and is to be expected. Dr. Mayorga asked for more information about how it will change. Ms. Rosenthal said there would be a slight color change, but it is not expected to go completely dark or green. If there is an extreme change, she said, a local conservator could be consulted to do a re-patinization and that this has been discussed with conservators at RLA and Evergreene.

Dr. Alvarez-Perez clarified that the Commission has the ultimate decision.

With no further discussion, the following motion was made:

Mr. Pantin made a motion recommending approval of the Art in Public Places waiver request by the Villa Valencia development project to commission and incorporate artwork by artist Thomas Houseago into the project as presented and as recommended by the Arts Advisory Panel with consideration to increase the scale of the artwork and height of the plinth. Dr. Alvarez-Perez seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved.

Ms. Davila and Ms. Rosenthal thanked the Panel and left the meeting.

There being no further business, the Cultural Development Board meeting adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine J. Cathers
Arts & Culture Specialist