

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C-1
May 8, 2018
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada
Commissioner Michael Mena**

City Staff

**City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Historic Preservation Officer, Dona Spain**

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item C-1 [9:40:37 a.m.]

Mayor's Comments

Report from staff on proposed measures to incentivize art galleries and artist-in-residence programs.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mayor's Comments – Report from staff on proposed measures to incentivize art galleries and artist-in-residence programs.

Preservation Officer Spain: Good morning, for the record Dona Spain. Aaron if you can put up the PowerPoint.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Mayor, I just want to say before we get started on this. I love this idea, glad you pushed it forward.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What?

Vice Mayor Quesada: I said I really like this idea; I'm glad you pushed it forward.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, yes, yes.

Preservation Officer Spain: Yes, so am I. I think it's a great idea. So, this is a photograph of Denman Fink that is George Merrick's uncle, Althea's younger brother, and I chose him for the first slide because he was an artist. He was a very well-known illustrator nationally when he came to Coral Gables, and he was the artistic advisor for the City. They had an artistic advisor in the 1920's for the City. So this City was founded by artists; Althea was an artist, George Merrick was a poet, H. George Fink was an architect, the whole family was made up of artisans. So, I think it's really appropriate for us to do these incentives, so that this can become once again a City for artists. So, the first one that you all discussed was an artisan resident program; these are just staffs' thoughts. We can elaborate on this, change it, it's just our initial thoughts you discussed at the last Commission meeting. So, the concept is that a developer of a mixed use project may request a waiver of the Art in Public Places requirement of paying one percent of the project value into the Art Acquisition Fund, by providing a live-work space for an artist, a rent-free place to live that is associated with a ground level studio. So as you know right now, if you are a developer, you are required to pay one percent of the cost of the project into the Art Acquisition Fund and you can request a waiver of that fund even now, and there are four different types of waivers. You can do art for the project; you can contribute art to the City; you can – the value of the one percent can go into either purchasing or restoring a historic property or you can put in money to acquire open space. So it's our idea to make this a fifth waiver, didn't do an artist resident program. So the question is, do we want to provide incentives for a developer to do this. It would need to be, since this is a set fee, the one percent, it wouldn't need to be something that would be a one-time fee, we haven't really figured out what that would be yet, but we are working on that, if you all want to do incentives. It could be something like reduction in the permit cost, something like that. So these are our thoughts. The live-work space requirement would be for a defined time, not in perpetuity, possibly five years, it all depends what the one percent calculates out to be. The selection of the artist would be through the Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Department with input from the Arts Advisory Panel, so you don't have a residential project, if someone wants to bring their cousin in to stay for six months, it needs to be some type of an established artist. The length of time for an artist would be for two years, that's up for discussion. The artist is required to give at least one public lecture and is required to give one work of art to the City; and it would be a ground floor studio space, so that's its visible to the public from the street. So to implement this, there would need to be a zoning code text amendment of the portion that discusses waiver of the Art in Public Places fee and also a text amendment to add a definition of the artist in residence program, so we can set up the parameters. So the other thing you discussed was art galleries...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Dona, before we leave the art in residence program, the City Attorney was really helpful; the team came together and talked about it. One of the incentives you already provide in a residential building, if they do mixed use commercial, they get to build more; and so this artist in residency program, the studio and the loft would count toward that mixed use opportunity that would yield bonus. So, I don't want you to think that you have to provide additional money into this equation or an additional incentive. It's like, if you look at 33 Alhambra that has those ground floor studio and loft, they are using that space to meet their mixed use requirements and this is a perfect example of how it could be applied.

Preservation Officer Spain: That's right. So, the second thing that you all discussed were art galleries; and the concept here we thought would be that a developer may include an art gallery in the initial design of the project in order to take advantage of certain incentives; and these are the incentives that we discussed, but there could be others, in order to encourage developers to choose this option, we were considering the following incentives. The space would not count toward FAR of the property and the space would be exempt from the parking requirements. Now the question is, is that a one-to-one, possibly its more than that, or two or three times the space in order for there to be an incentive for the developer to provide this space. These are our thoughts. We need to define what an art gallery is, we need to consider co-tenants. Very often in other municipalities they have a coffee bar mixed with an art gallery and we think that's worth exploring. The space requirements for a gallery need to be considered. We need to figure out what the height of the storefront, loading docks, all of that needs to take into considerations; and we would require a restrictive covenant that could only be amended or released by the City Commission, because this would be in perpetuity in that space. The implementation would be again, a zoning code text amendment, to allow for art galleries to qualify as commercial space and to add a definition of art galleries. So next steps, – and I have to say we met a few times on this. We met with the City Attorney's Office, Ramon Trias was involved, because it involves the zoning code, the Manager's Office we met with. This is the process. We would like to meet with developers and artists and art galleries to get their input, so we can develop the details on both of these programs. What would it take for a developer to include an artist in residence in their project?- we need to hear from them. What would an artist need to actually apply to be an artist in residence and what are the incentives that the City would provide for a developer to have an art gallery space and then what are the requirements of that space? So that's our challenge now. This is a timeline – we would like to meet with developers, artists and galleries in May, June and July, we would like to meet with them individually, so it will take a while. We need to develop the text and guidelines that would be in July and August. I'd like to present this to the Arts Advisory Panel and Cultural Development Board in August, and then present to the Planning and Zoning Board in September, then come back to you in October. And, I close with another view

of Denman Fink and this is him as a young man painting a portrait of his daughter and we have that portrait.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have that?

Preservation Officer Spain: We do. We just recently had it restored. It's beautiful.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Where do we have it?

Preservation Officer Spain: Well it goes back into the Merrick House when that's ready to be opened.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Well thank you very much for the presentation. I think it's a wonderful program. It takes a lot of thought as to what is an artist; you know the economic substance of it. We used to be in the 90's and the 80's and 90's the art gallery capital of South Florida, and we lost most of these art galleries, mostly I think because of space requirements and the rentals here and the attractiveness of Wynnewood at that time for them. That has turned against Wynnewood today in that a lot of galleries are thinking of moving out because of the rent, and because of how expensive it is to be there; and I'd like to try to bring some of those back and make us into what we used to be, which is the art gallery capital of South Florida. I'm very much for it; I'm very much for these incentives if they are well crafted and well designed and I welcome your input into the process and maybe you can bring something back to us.

Preservation Officer Spain: We will.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Not maybe, I hope you bring something back to us.

Preservation Officer Spain: I'm very excited about this. I think it's the right thing to do.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I love this. I think it's a great idea. I just want to make sure that we are careful how we structure the final code, because I would hate for a developer to come in and say OK, we are going to have an artist resident for five years, they've donated a piece of art and the first thing that comes to mind is they've done a little piece of art. But obviously we will work it into the code; and then after five years and they do no Art in Public places, so it can't be one for another, it's got to be some sort of logical blend so that we maintain...

Preservation Officer Spain: That's a challenge.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We'll work it out, of course.

Commissioner Mena: The other thing on that same note. I think this is a great idea and certainly a worthy endeavor. In terms of crafting the incentives, I'd also like to be mindful of the fact that, if they are going to have a gallery or something of that sort at the outset of a project, I'm asking to exempt FAR and parking requirements.

Preservation Officer Spain: It has to be enforced.

Commissioner Mena: Well not just that, but if that gallery is not there two years later and now there is something other than a gallery there, we've exempted parking requirements and FAR and there is some other sort of...

Preservation Officer Spain: That's why for that it needs to be in perpetuity.

Commissioner Mena: Right.

Preservation Officer Spain: That's why we need to put it as some type of covenant that runs with the land and they would need to come back to this City Commission in order to amend that. I know we are going to work with the City Attorney's office...

City Attorney Ramos: Right, that's correct. Because the five years maybe would be for the artist in residence, which is different than the FAR and parking requirement, which is part of the art gallery piece, which would be in perpetuity.

Commissioner Mena: OK.

City Attorney Ramos: So, there would always have to be an art gallery there.

Commissioner Mena: Well, let's discuss how that would work and just keep those things in mind, because I think that's important.

Preservation Officer Spain: It's complicated.

Commissioner Keon: Someone had suggested that when you, particularly with the galleries that you require some hours of operation, or at least lighting in the galleries so we don't have dark spaces on our streets. They would use some particular type of lighting that doesn't affect or harm their art, but that it is, if we are going to support this and incentivize it that we have activated spaces even if it's not open.

Commissioner Lago: Dona, if you would do me a favor, again I think this is a great idea. I think that we need to do a few things and look at the process a little bit more in depth before obviously we come back in October. We've been talking probably for the last year about artist in residency and finding opportunity, you and I, along with the Manager.

Preservation Officer Spain: Yes.

Commissioner Lago: I would like for you just to talk to the Mayor, since I can't have this discussion with him and explain to him the idea about the historic homes that are going to be potentially available and how we can use those, see if that interests him as an opportunity, not only to restore those homes, which are beautiful, quintessential Coral Gables properties and then maybe use those properties to eventually house these artists in residence. Also you mentioned, it's about five years. I think it's a little long for the program for one artist. Most residency programs, for example that are run here or run in New York are one or two years maximum.

Preservation Officer Spain: Yes. The thought on that was it possibly isn't the same artist that maybe you do an artist there for six months or a year, and then it changes out. But, in order to – we are going to have a set amount, that one percent is going to be a set amount that we are going to calculate. We need to figure out what that length of artist would be for that project, but it's not our intent to have the same artist there for five years.

Commissioner Lago: You could, as you continue to work on this potential ordinance, speak to my colleagues about the meetings that we've had up-to-date in regards to those four properties....

Preservation Officer Spain: I will.

Commissioner Lago:...and see if there is an interest in potentially engaging, along with the additional empty lot that's next door, because it's kind of in line with what we've been talking about.

Preservation Officer Spain: Absolutely.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So how many – so the historic home idea...

Preservation Officer Spain: That's a slightly different concept – that's not part of a developer's incentive program...

Vice Mayor Quesada: I understand that, but since we are talking about bringing artists to the City, I'm curious.

Commissioner Lago: So about a year ago, and we've been talking about it for a year and change probably, and we've had multiple meetings, I think we've been on site two times. There are four shotgun homes, again Dona will tell you, they are stunning.

Preservation Officer Spain: They are amazing, but they are amazing shotgun homes.

Commissioner Lago: Amazing, amazing pieces of property in the McFarlane neighborhood and there is an adjacent lot that just came up for sale; and you talk about having the opportunity to make sure that we keep these in our portfolio. We've met with the owners; there is an interest in potentially engaging us...

Vice Mayor Quesada: Are you saying, so us potentially purchasing these properties?

Commissioner Lago: They don't have the wherewithal at the present moment to keep those properties up and they are in pretty rough shape right now. It would take a lot of money to bring them up to our standards, but I think it's something that we could all have a discussion. I don't want to take the Mayor's idea...

Vice Mayor Quesada: I think the Mayor's goal is to bring more art to the City.

Commissioner Lago: Yes – and what I wanted to do and I didn't want to bring it to you before we had everything, cross our T's and dot our I's, I think that this could potentially work along with the Mayor's idea, which I'm 100 percent in support of, because if we are able to acquire these properties, bring four artists a year into these properties, they can live there.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And then their location is...

Commissioner Lago: It activates the neighborhood; you have an empty lot next door which you could have some sort of public programming for them to do symposiums, to do kind of activation for the children in the neighborhood, and then they could have a show, like the Mayor was saying, once a month – sculpture show, painting show. It could be in our downtown, they can move the work to the museum, they can do as they please or whatever the program ends up being, but this could be an opportunity to have like an artist little village.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I think it sounds great. I think the only issue is to talk about the details and the pricing and all that. I'm fully supportive of staff looking into it in conjunction with this, if that's OK with you Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Preservation Officer Spain: Thank you.

[End: 9:55:31 a.m.]