



**City of Coral Gables  
CITY COMMISSION MEETING  
October 14, 2008**

**ITEM TITLE:**

Consideration of the Country Club of Coral Gables RFP Evaluation Committee's Recommendation to authorize the City Manager to commence negotiations with Liberty Events, LLC, for the long-term leasing of the Country Club of Coral Gables subject to certain terms and conditions and resulting in a draft lease agreement for City Commission consideration.

**ACTION REQUESTED BY THE CITY MANAGER:**

That the Commission accept the recommendation of the Evaluation Committee and thereby authorize the City Manager to commence negotiations with Liberty Events LLC incorporating the concerns and comments of the Evaluation Committee and consultants, to present a draft lease to the appropriate boards per the Procurement Code and to submit the draft lease to the City Commission for final consideration.

**BACKGROUND:**

In June, 2008, per Resolution 2008-84, the City Commission authorized the release of a Country Club of Coral Gables RFP to solicit varied types of proposals for the long-term leasing of a City-owned facility located at 997 North Greenway Drive. Proposals would need to be consistent with local zoning regulations, prove compatible with, and suitable for the surrounding historic single family neighborhood, provide demonstrated community benefit and a stable revenue stream for the City, and offer appropriate consideration to Coral Gables residents and former club members. Proposers responding to this RFP also had the opportunity to manage adjacent facilities including the Tennis Courts and the Granada Golf Course, provided they would be open to the public.

A pre-submission conference and site tour was held June 25, and proposals were due July 31, 2008. Two proposals were received by the stipulated deadline and forwarded to a Staff Certification Committee for sufficiency. One proposal was judged insufficient and disqualified. The other, submitted by Toronto-based Liberty Events, LLC, was forwarded to an Evaluation Committee for consideration and recommendation based on established criteria stated in the City RFP. The proposal was for the Country Club building and the Tennis Courts, with a notation that they "will be asking for a right to enter into a lease agreement for the golf course facility after five years of operation."

The Proposed Nature of the Operation was as follows:

- a. Create a profitable long-term development and ongoing operation of The Country Club of Coral Gables
- b. Ongoing operation will include all responsibility of staffing, food preparation and service, facility maintenance, occupancy costs and ongoing capital investment required for the operation of the hospitality and recreational facilities
- c. Exclusively provide all food, beverage, and hospitality operations throughout the facility. The proponent will develop: a casual dining operation and a full-service

- banquet and event venue
- d. Develop and enhance the Country Club's position as Coral Gables' premier special event venue
- e. Commit to the upgrade and enhancement of existing casual dining facilities and special event spaces
- f. Explore the possibility for additional outdoor foodservice operations
- g. Expand the utilization of undeveloped space for year-round dining opportunities.

The proposal included Liberty's commitment to design, finance, and construct all renovations, paying particular attention and detail to the historic significance of the venue. The estimated cost was \$1million to \$1.5 million, with an opening date scheduled for October 1, 2009. The term proposed was for a period of not less than 10 years and not more than 20 years, beginning with a base rent of \$240,000 per year plus a participation rent of 5% for sales over \$4 million.

A five member Evaluation Committee convened on September 17, 2008 to receive a presentation from Liberty Events and to hear findings from City Consultants. Members of the Evaluation Committee included Ms. Lisa Bennett (Historic Preservation Board), Mr. Ray Zomerfeld (Economic Development Board), Ms. Martha Pozo-Diaz (Property Advisory Board), Mr. Chris Morrison (Traffic Advisory Board) and Ms. Haydee Polo (Parks & Recreation Board). City consultants were Miami-based hospitality consultants Adelfi Group (Chuck Martinez and Gil Katzman) and real estate advisor Barry Abramson of Abramson and Associates.

Criteria were as follows: Proposer's experience and qualifications (25%), Ability of the concept and uses to enhance and contribute to the quality-of-life of Coral Gables and the immediate neighborhood (25%), City Financial Benefits (20%), Likely market and financial viability (20%) and Considerations given to former club members, Coral Gables residents, and local civic organizations (10%).

Detailed minutes of the 3-hour proceedings, the complete Liberty Events proposal which documents extensive experience and significant community outreach, and consultant reports are included in this agenda item. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Evaluation Committee unanimously passed the following motion:

- **that the City negotiate with Liberty Group for the long term leasing of the Coral Gables Country Club;**
- **that the City Commission note concerns expressed by the consultants in their summary reports;**
- **that Liberty Group ensure public access to the Coral Gables Country Club facilities (for a fee and not limited to a membership class);**
- **that Liberty Group endeavor to accommodate local civic and service organizations by providing reasonable pricing for breakfasts and lunches so these organizations may avail themselves of the facilities;**
- **that Liberty Group's proposal further delineate the separate responsibilities of Liberty Group and Aries;**
- **that the City establish regular and appropriate oversight of the operation;**
- **that the City move forward expeditiously, both in approval and regulatory processes, to facilitate opening of the club in a timely manner.**

City Staff will present the Evaluation Committee findings followed by a short presentation from Mr. Nick DiDonato, P. Eng., President and CEO of Liberty Events, LLC. In addition to City Staff, City Consultants, and Mr. DiDonato will be available for questions from the City Commission.

**REVIEWED BY:**

<b>Department Director</b>	<b>City Attorney (If Applicable)</b>	<b>City Manager</b>

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. Sept 17, 2008 Evaluation Committee Minutes
2. Liberty Events LLC proposal to lease the Country Club of Coral Gables
3. Adelfi Group Report to the Evaluation Committee, Sept 17, 2008
4. Stage 1 Financial Evaluation by Barry Abramson (and Sept 10, 2008 summary email)
5. City of Coral Gables Country Club RFP issued June 10, 2008

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