

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C-7
January 24, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Frank Quesada
Commissioner Jeannett Slesnick

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Historic Preservation Officer, Dona Spain
Arts and Cultural Specialist, Catherine Cathers

Public Speaker(s)

Nina Burgos, Cultural Development Board Member

Agenda Item C-7 [9:35:56 a.m.]

A Resolution approving the Fiscal Year 2016-2017 Cultural Grants.

Mayor Cason: C-7.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Mr. Mayor you all asked for more information, so I think if you look the final count was like 472 pages was added in the process, but I will ask Diana, Dona Spain to come forward to answer questions that you have, but the applications, the summary paragraphs of the different cultural groups, the questions, the more detailed minutes were included in your packet and it is well over 400 pages.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, if you don't mind, I pulled this item if you just let me lead it I think I can speed it up, so we don't spend the next few hours on this, let's keep it quick. Alright, so C-7,

I was the one that asked you guys for additional information. In the legal world we call this a document dump, because you just gave us everything in the world.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: We didn't give you everything....

Vice Mayor Quesada: Oh, you didn't, OK, well. Well, it's OK, I went through it. So, my concern was we didn't fully understand, obviously we appreciate all the work that the Board puts into this and that you guys put into this as well, you ladies put into this as well. There are few events that just pop out at me, the particular one is Bike Walk Coral Gables that I was looking at their application, they have 17 events, they go throughout the City. We see them on their bikes in every different neighborhood, you know they are really promoting the City, which I think is a great event, I think it's a shame for them not to get any money. So, I was looking at a few different events, and if you look at page 87 of the document that you gave us, the UM. Lowe Art, I see that we give them that they get some money, and I thought you know something the University of Miami does, their events are still going to happen whether we give them money or not, however, I looked at it and we have over 3,000 residents attend those events, so it would be a shame to take the funding away from that and they have 29 events throughout the year, so I changed my mind on that. Page 225, Murray Drainoff event, which is a piano recital, its one event, we get 250 residents and we are giving them \$5,800. I know to some other cities that may sound like not a lot of money, but for us and for our total budget being \$175,000 with so many different non-profits that are looking for funds, I'd rather give that money to the Bike Walk or another event that's going to have more residents attend. I understand the Murray Drainoff event brings two world renowned pianists from Germany and we house them for this event, but again, its 250 residents as compared to I think hundreds or I don't know if it reaches thousands, the Bike Walk or the St. Patrick's Day Festival or some of the events that are going to get more exposure. I understand this is not just an exposure event; this is the quality of the event as well.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I understand.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I also saw IlluminArts, page 267 of the document that you guys gave us, and I just had a quick question about that. It didn't show to me whether it was a Coral Gables event or not, I'm assuming it is, because I know the catchall at the beginning says it has to be a Coral Gables event, and then it says one event, but then it says five free events, so I wasn't sure what the answer was, is it one event or is it five events, is it six events?

Ms. Cathers: I'd have to get back to you on that.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, those are my thoughts, that's it. If you can address those key points and I think I'll be done with this.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Catherine Cathers is more knowledgeable on this than I am, but the thing that I remember about Bike Day is the ranking that the Board did and we have Board members, we have four members of the Cultural Development Board here.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And you have my Board member's the best.

[Laughter]

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: The issue for me would be the ranking that they gave Bike Day.

Vice Mayor Quesada: I saw that; they felt two out of the money category.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: It fell out of that, but there were other organizations that got a higher grade, a higher ranking that are not getting funds, so I'm not sure about reaching down and giving that, but you certainly can. It's totally up to the Commission.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, I saw there was one that was ahead of them that did not receive any funds as well, Greater Miami Youth Symphony of Dade County. I looked at that one as well and I think that was page 311 of the document, and...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: The good thing about this is we have more people applying and more people actually recommending for funding, so it's going in the right direction.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And Vice Mayor if you would like to refer this to our office where another way of handling it separate from the cultural process, because they are creating that green space on Galiano, because they have presented us with those bike repair areas, I think that we might be able to find some sustainability assistance that could also support the good work of Bike Walk.

Mayor Cason: One of the things we might consider the next budget cycle is going to be coming up increase the amount of money for cultural, you have more people applying.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I'm sure your Cultural Board would embrace that recommendation.

Mayor Cason: I'm sure they would. And the second point that, I have a problem with us giving money for operational funds to organizations that have budgets of over \$8 million, when we are so short in money; we have so many people applying. We have so many smaller organizations that could really benefit from \$2-3-4 thousand dollars.

Vice Mayor Quesada: That was a very specific number \$8 million. What organization are you referring to?

Mayor Cason: That's Fairchild and Montgomery gets – between Fairchild and Montgomery we are giving them like 10 percent of our total budget. They make \$8 million, they charge to come in. It's a wonderful organization, but we have to decide where our money goes, we are giving an awful lot of it for operational expenses of big organizations that, you know it's a drop in the bucket, they wouldn't even know that we gave them any money. And so, when you have to exclude certain other groups you might consider the next Commission whether or not we want to put maybe, right now I think we are putting a third of our budget goes for Coral Gables based organizations, if I'm not mistaken, \$50,000 something like that out of \$150,000. Having maybe more money go for Coral Gables or increasing the amount of money or looking very carefully at organizations that have gotten money in the past and don't get it again and explain why not, because you read through it and there is no reason or rhyme, and I think if they are doing good work they shouldn't be penalized if they are not as good as a writer or grant writers as others.

Vice Mayor Quesada: But they don't have the resources.

Mayor Cason: No resources, so...

Commissioner Slesnick: I like our cultural grant funding to go to seeding organizations and new projects, which starts them off which really affect the citizens of Coral Gables in open air projects and so forth, rather than to larger institutions.

Mayor Cason: St. Patrick's Festival, I know they want to speak; they've spoken before on this. We gave them \$3,600 something like that last year and this year they didn't get anything. So, if they are not going to get money and they've had it, we should explain what was wrong, nobody showed up, bad quality, or whatever it is, because otherwise they won't know.

Vice Mayor Quesada: That becomes difficult and I understand the difficulty of putting this list together, it's not easy for the Board to put this together, because I'm sure in their minds they want to give it to everyone, of course they do; and it's difficult from that perspective, because then we have to police every event.

Mayor Cason: Aren't they supposed to attend though?

Ms. Cathers: They attend as many as they can.

Mayor Cason: And tell us, I mean tell you the Cultural Board, nobody showed up.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Maybe we make a requirement of the Board, at least one Board member has to...maybe at the beginning of the calendar season we designate or does that happen already?

Ms. Cathers: Here is our Board member Nina Burgos.

Ms. Burgos: Good morning. I'm not official but there are Board members when we come back to the meetings that report to the events that we've attended and talked about attendance, quality, things like that, the Board is very active and does make sure it tries to attend.

Vice Mayor Quesada: So, maybe for next year what we do is, when the analysis is occurring that Board member that attended has to give a simple synopsis of how many people attended, the quality of the event, just to help us moving forward to determine if we want to keep giving money to those organizations.

Ms. Burgos: Sure.

Mayor Cason: Because you have to have some way to say yes or no, they say it's difficult.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes, it is. Again, we want to give the money to the best events. We had an issue last year which that organization will remain nameless that obviously was unfortunate that we had to deal with, and it's just so that we can ensure the quality moving forward and making sure the right ones get it.

Ms. Burgos: Sure. It is a lengthy process and some of us have been both on the panel review site grant applications and on the actual grant application side, so we have a good idea of the process and what's needed to apply, but also we want to make sure that the right quality program that happens in the City is obviously fidelity of the dollars that are being spent for programming.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes. So, which brings us to the question does the Commission have any desire to change anything that has been recommended to us?

Commissioner Lago: I'm in a catch-22, because I agree with you in reference to Bike Walk Coral Gables, but I would hate to see such a spectacular show cultural event like the Drainoff event suffer. If I could just say one thing?

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes, go ahead.

Commissioner Lago: I don't know if that has been done before, but is there a way that we could fund potentially both of these projects; because I think they are quintessential Coral Gables. We

talk about culture, we talk about transit, we talk about pedestrian-friendly access, I think that this is important that we make this exception.

Vice Mayor Quesada: What I want to do is, if it's OK, I don't want to keep dragging this on, but I'm going to, if it's OK with the Mayor and the rest of the Commission, if we can just push this back another two weeks. What I want to do is, I want to meet with Fairchild to discuss it with them before we pull it out from them, I want to have a conversation with them to see...

Mayor Cason: And Montgomery too.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And I think the Mayor raised a good point, I'm sure the \$8,000 or \$10,000 that we are giving to Fairchild, the \$9,900 is going to unrestricted funds that just sit there and I think there can be understanding, but I don't want to do that without them being present and, I mean they fully complied and they were the second highest or third highest rated organization.

Ms. Cathers: If I may address that point, because the Board this year and Nina can speak to this as well, they actually raised the criteria, they have to have organizational budgets over \$500,000, in the past it was \$250,000, so they wanted to up that level; and one of the reasons that that category was created historically many years ago was to honor those organizations that have their anchor here, they are based in Coral Gables, they aren't organizations that are based outside of our City, and they are prominent organizations that have an impact, not only in our community, but regionally and nationally, so having the City of Coral Gables and our name associated with those organizations at that level was something that the Board has consistently spoken about and supported.

Mayor Cason: You want to make a motion?

Vice Mayor Quesada: That I'm confused.

[Laughter]

Mayor Cason: You want to go back give it another two weeks and maybe if there are any other possibilities to accommodate some of these that didn't quite get some money this year.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I don't want to open the barn door. Clearly Bike Walk we can figure out, because it is the sustainability piece of it, the encouraging bikes, safe bikes in our community. There is an additional benefit beyond the culture. I would say Mr. Vice Mayor, if you do talk to Fairchild, we'd like to add to your conversation, because we've had Lieutenant Lemon, Sergeant Jenkins and I have met personally with them about some vehicle break-ins in their parking lot and we believe they can solve it with their volunteers and we haven't gotten a

lot of traction, but with you going across the table talking about a variety of things, I'm absolutely confident they'll pay more attention.

Vice Mayor Quesada: OK. So, I'll make a motion to defer this item for another two weeks, so that I have the opportunity to speak to Fairchild and Montgomery and I'll report back to you, and I'll ask them to be present at the next meeting.

Mayor Cason: Do I have a second.

Commissioner Lago: So moved.

Mayor Cason: Commissioner Lago seconds – City Clerk.

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Vice Mayor Quesada: And I want to be clear, thank you for your work, hard work on this item. I don't want to disrupt what you guys have done; I'm just trying to find a way to give a little bit more. Thank you guys.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And I understand you don't want any more documents presented other than the...

[Laughter]

Vice Mayor Quesada: It's OK. I'm used to document dumps.

Mayor Cason: And I'll give Mr. ____ a chance to come back next time to pitch.

Commissioner Keon: Can I ask one question Dona? On this where you lay out this summary of the cultural grants, do the events here like the Miami-Dade College Foundation Film Festival where does this take place? I guess what I want to know is for all of these...I know and that was what I wanted to know.

Ms. Cathers: I'm sorry, excuse me. The Miami-Dade College is with the Miami International Film Festival, it's been taking place at the Coral Gables Art Cinema. In the past they have also had locations at the Cosford Cinema, as well.

Commissioner Keon: Well I want to know that if – I mean I thought from reading the grant parameters the events were to take place here in the City of Coral Gables.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: That's right; they have to take place in Coral Gables.

Commissioner Keon: So, we know that every one of these events that are listed here takes place in the City of Coral Gables.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: That's right. That's right.

Commissioner Keon: OK. I just wanted to confirm. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much.

[End: 9:50:32 a.m.]