



City of Coral Gables  
CITY COMMISSION MEETING  
August 28, 2018

**ITEM TITLE:**

A Resolution authorizing the City Manager to negotiate and draft a lease agreement with Centro Cultural Espanol de Cooperacion Iberoamericano, Inc (“CCE”), a Florida Not Profit Company, in regards to the City-owned property located at 2506 Ponce De Leon Blvd, Coral Gables, FL while ensuring CCE’s use preserves the building’s historic designation.

**DEPARTMENT HEAD RECOMMENDATION:**

Approval

**BRIEF HISTORY:**

The original studio of H. George Fink, located at 2506 Ponce de Leon Blvd, Coral Gables, FL, (“Fink Studio”) a model for Mediterranean architecture in Coral Gables, was designed in 1925 by Fink who was one of the City’s earliest and most prolific architects. He was also the cousin of Coral Gables Founder George Merrick. The Fink Studio is on the Coral Gables Register of Historic Places.

The Fink Studio is one of only two non-residential properties in Coral Gables where the historic interior has remained intact. The other is the Coral Gables Congregational Church located at 3010 DeSoto Boulevard.

In order to preserve the historic nature and honor its history, the City purchased the Fink Studio on February 10, 2016, including the original interior furnishings.

Due to its historic significance, the City wanted to select a tenant whose use would have minimal impact on the interior/exterior and a use that would provide an economic benefit to downtown Coral Gables. The inquiries including several entities, all of which were not-for-profit who understood the City’s criteria. The City has received several proposals from various organizations to lease the building; after discussions with various proposers, the two active pursuers are Centro Cultural Español (aka CCE Miami), the Spanish Cultural Center and Societa Dante Alighieri (aka Italian Cultural Center) in collaboration with Alliance Francaise (French Cultural Center), and Goethe-Institut (German Cultural Center), hereafter the “Dante Collaboration”

The City created a “Selection Committee” made up of the Economic Development Board, Property Advisory Board, Budget Advisory Board, Historic Preservation Board, and the Cultural Advisory Board to assist in selecting between the CCE and the Dante Collaboration. Staff requested the bidders complete a tenant credit application, [that included a request for], financial statements, tax returns, and a business plan as part of the

bidding process.

CCE Miami was founded in 1996 as a 501(c)(3), a not for profit corporation, and was originally located in Coral Gables up to 2010 before they located to Downtown Miami. Their objective is to promote Spanish culture, as noted by their mission statement, "... is to promote the social, human and economic development in South Florida through the cultural exchange of institutions and creators from Spain, Latin America and Miami providing a platform for dialogue and education for the city." The organization is sponsored by the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation and Development (AECID) and is the only one of its kind in the US. They promote the culture through a variety of programs that include art exhibits, music, literature, conferences, performing arts and educational programming all of which are offered free to the public for ages 4 to 80 years old. As the winning bidder, they would like to lease while continuing to operate their downtown Miami microtheaters which are not allowed in the City. They are funded by AECID, state and local grants, sponsors and ticket revenues. The City reviewed their credit application, financial statements, tax returns, and experience to determine they are a credit-worthy tenant.

Dante Alighieri Miami was incorporated and have been in the Gables since 1997 as a Florida not for profit entity (no federal filings were registered as a not for profit (e.g. 501(c)(3))). Their mission is to "promote the study of the Italian language and culture throughout the world..." Dante Alighieri was formed in Italy and has branches throughout world. They offer language courses from beginners to advanced literature, in addition to their cultural activities. Their revenue sources are mainly from language classes, but also generate from membership, gift shop, and bookstore sales. They do plan on adding concerts, art exhibits, book presentations, theatre, cinema, lecturers, and food and wine programs. The Dante Collaboration provided several letters of recommendation and a credit application, limited to Dante Alighieri Miami's information and no further information requested, including but not limited to financial statements or tax returns were provided.

On that July 25 selection meeting at the Fink Studio, the City's Historic Preservation Officer provided a historic tour. The two groups presented to four of the 5 members. The Budget Advisory Board member attended via conference call. Staff provided a brief history of the building, the organizations, and credit worthiness opinion on both applicants as part of the review process. After the tour, presentation and deliberations the four Selection Committee members in attendance unanimously selected CCE Miami as the winning bidder. The one member from the Budget Advisory Board who was not present did not vote.

Staff is requesting authorization to negotiate and draft a lease agreement with CCE Miami to provide Spanish cultural programming, excluding the micro theaters, that will preserve the historic nature of the building's interior and exterior. If an agreement cannot be reached the City would like to negotiate with the Dante Collaboration to lease the Fink Studio.

**ADVISORY BOARD/COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION(S):**

Date.	Board/Committee	Comments
7/25/18	Fink Selection Committee	Recommended CCE as the winning bidder to enter into lease negotiations

**ATTACHMENT(S):**

- 1. Proposed Resolution with Proposed Lease Agreement**
- 2. Excerpt minutes of the Selection Committee meeting of July 25, 2018**
- 3. Copies of the Dante Alighieri Letter of Recommendations**