

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-3
December 8, 2015
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
Chief Preservation Officer, Dona Spain
Arts and Cultural Specialist, Catherine Cathers**

Public Speaker(s)

**Charles Davis
Noelle Stillings
Donald Harrington, President of the Emerald Society**

Agenda Item G-3 [Start: 2:09:42 p.m.]

A Resolution approving the Fiscal Year 2015-2016 Cultural Grants

Mayor Cason: Let's do G-3. Some people have been waiting for quite some time. This is a Resolution approving the cultural grants. I don't have the card here, if you'll come up and state your name, you want to speak.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We also have a presentation ready from the Cultural Development Board staff to answer any questions that you have as well.

Mayor Cason: Make your presentation and then...

Mrs. Spain: Very briefly – we have a recommendation from the Cultural Development Board on the grants money in the City. I'd like to introduce to you Catherine Cathers, she is the Arts and Cultural Specialist, my department, I'm thrilled to have her, so we can answer any questions you might have on their recommendations. In your package you have the votes of the Board Members and also their scores, 80 was the cut-off.

Mayor Cason: Just an observation separate from this, I mentioned this with the Manager. I would like going forward to have some kind of, for next year, some kind of criteria for need. I've always been concerned about Fairchild that has millions of dollars and they get \$7,500 of our scarce money, which means we can't give it to somebody else. We have a lot of organizations that are not in the Gables that are doing something in the Gables, but you don't see Gables much in the names of all of these organizations that are getting grants, unless we are going to drastically increase the amount of money, I think we ought to have some criteria in there if they really need it, are there a lot of other sources of funding, because presumably they are all good programs, but somebody without very much money is not going to be able to do it...

Mrs. Spain: We'll work on those criteria for next cycle.

Mayor Cason: So the recommendations have come out. Anything before we – we have three speakers who want to talk about that. We simplified the process, right?- this year, the whole process for the grants.

Mrs. Spain: It's actually online for the first time. That was a bit of a challenge, but it worked out and actually the final reports from last year's recipients were also online and so that simplified it. We also gave them the opportunity if they weren't able to do it online to come in and give it to us and Catherine's been great about that.

Mayor Cason: So all the money – remind me how much we have this year.

Mrs. Spain: \$150,000.

Mayor Cason: \$150,000 – so all of that’s been allocated based on the voting with 80 as the minimum score.

Mrs. Spain: Yes. And there is no process to throw out highs and lows or anything. It’s just whoever drops...

Mrs. Spain: No, there’s not. There are some apparent organizations that have that; we don’t have that in our criteria.

Commissioner Slesnick: And Dona, how many were not approved or disqualified?

Ms. Cathers: There were two that were disqualified and then six that were not funded due to the low score. So we had 35 applicants in total, which we are really proud of, and the recommendations for 27 organizations to receive funding.

Mayor Cason: And there was no record as to those that voted not to fund the project why, it’s just the votes came in, you counted and just draw a line.

Ms. Cathers: Yes, they are averaged out; there are different criteria, so they score depending on the different criteria and then the average is for all of the Board members are taken.

Mayor Cason: OK.

Commissioner Keon: I have one question. The Area Performance Gallery Inc. was awarded two different grants. Do you usually do that?

Mrs. Spain: No.

Commissioner Keon: Why did you do it? Is there a particular reason why it was done this year?

Ms. Cathers: Typically no, and in the guidelines it does state that one organization is not eligible to qualify in two different or two different categories unless they are completely different presenting organizations. So former staff had given the organization a directive that they could do that and we felt that we didn’t want to contradict what the information.

Mrs. Spain: We had concerns about that – remember we just took this over, and we contacted the organization and asked them why they were in two categories, and they said that they were told by the previous people that were handling these grants that they should do that.

Mayor Cason: How much were the grants?- the two grants?

Commissioner Keon: One was \$3,000, one was \$9,000, but what would you recommend?- would you recommend that you award those or would you recommend that you ask them to choose, or what would you do?

Mrs. Spain: We went to the Cultural Development Board and brought it up to them, they voted on both of the categories and so they did actually receive, recommending to receive \$9,055, \$6,025 for cultural and \$3,030 for community, that's Area Stage. Now the highest ranking grant recipient other than that is Actor's Playhouse and they received and they are recommending \$7,000. We were a little concerned about it, but...

Commissioner Slesnick: So where was Area Stage on both of those?- where were their rankings? I mean, were they like second, third, fourth?

Commissioner Keon: Its fine – they ranked into the position that they deserve a grant, so that's fine. It's whether or not our funding procedures and rules or whatever, practices are that you fund an agency more than once. If our policy, I don't know, policy or practice?

Mrs. Spain: Well we told them this wasn't going to happen next year. Now that we are staffing it, we said that we are going to go to the Board recommending against it and we don't believe it's an appropriate...

Commissioner Keon: You don't think it's appropriate that you reclaim that money and redistribute it elsewhere? I don't want us to redistribute it.

Mayor Cason: That's not an option for us to implement your new policy now.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Excuse me sir. If you wanted to do that perhaps the best thing would be to take that particular item and remand that for further discussion with the Board

having heard what your expressed interest is, having them have the opportunity possibly to reallocate and then bring that part of it back to you. Approve the other items...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Reserve those two pieces, remand that back to the Board for further discussion and allow that to come up as a separate, on the next Commission agenda.

Commissioner Keon: I would like to make that motion.

Commissioner Slesnick: Second.

Mayor Cason: Why don't we hear from these three people representing one of the organizations that had a low score so they didn't get any money, because maybe that's something you want to throw in the mix. So let's have Charles Davis and then Donald Harrington and Noelle Stillings, if you could be as brief as possible.

Mr. Davis: Hello Mayor, Commissioners, City Attorney, thanks for having us. I'll start by introducing myself, but for those of you who don't know me, my name is Charles Davis, I was a City employee for 25 years. I've actually sat in some of those chairs that you are sitting in now on different committees. I retired ten years ago, and I kind of got involved in both the Emerald Society and the St. Patrick's Day Committee, which is the organization that puts on the St. Patrick's Day Festival in Coral Gables, and we've been doing that for over 18 years. We've been getting grant funding for about ten years and we are a total non-profit organization. We raise approximately \$30,000 a year in order to do that festival. It's the only thing we do a year in that time and it's the only thing we use that money for, there is no profit at all. If we have \$30,000 left after this festival we'll throw in next year and then we hope to gather enough funding during that festival to keep progression. We do it primarily to preserve Irish heritage here in Coral Gables.

Mayor Cason: That's why you are wearing green?

Mr. Davis: That's why I wore green today. And as you know we were here all day, so you got to see the green a lot. With me, I have Don Harrington. He is the President of the Emerald Society;

I'm the President of the St. Patrick's Day Committee Incorporated, which is a 501(c)3. Noelle is our grant person who attended all the grant procedures, so I'll let her speak on the procedure and how it went and Don will give you his support from the Emerald Society. Anybody has any questions for me before I go?

Vice Mayor Quesada: How much have you received from the City in the past if anything?

Mr. Davis: In the neighborhood of \$3,500. Like I said, it cost us \$30,000 to put on that one day event – between closing the streets, Police, Fire, barricades, renting the stage, I mean just everything incorporated, and its free entertainment, we don't charge anything. We run a bar, which is part of our income of that, we have vendors, but all of it is at a very moderate level. We have a lot of foot traffic from neighbors that's never been there and they show up and they go, wow, this festival is great, we didn't know you did it. We've been doing it there in Fred Hartnett Park, Marge Hartnett used to be real involved with us. It is what it is. We are trying to continue that and every stumbling block like this that we encounter jeopardizes next year's festival.

Commissioner Slesnick: It's a very well attended event too.

Mr. Davis: We've got 4-5,000 people there at any given time that changes throughout the day.

Mayor Cason: How much do you pay the City for fees and things associated?

Mr. Davis: I know and don't quote me on this exactly, there is about a \$900 special event fee, because of the size of our operation. We have four to six police officers, depending on the year on overtime for that entire time, starting at 8 in the morning because we blocked the street, because we have rides, we have carnival rides that are free while our attendees are there, and then we have the Fire Department. I think those three are basically are our cost to the City.

Mayor Cason: You have any parking meter...?

Mr. Davis: We kind of benefited the project that was there at 2100 Ponce was defunct and that kind of helped us out a lot. Originally there were meters there, but once we blocked the street off we haven't had a parking cost in about four years.

Mayor Cason: So some relief could be on the \$900 or \$1,000, that would be some help, and maybe we could remand this back to – throw it in the pot and have a re-discussion on the Cultural Affairs of those two elements, there is a solution in there.

Mr. Davis: One of them is there is a \$900 fee, which is really the only fee; the police officer which is the overtime of the officers that are there that's paid directly to them, and then the Fire Department, fire watch or medics that are paid to the Fire Department and then distributed.

Mayor Cason: And that has to be done separately.

Mr. Davis: I'll let Noelle talk about the procedure that went on with this.

Ms. Stillings: Hello Mayor and Commissioners. I had a brief speech, but in the interest of time I'll cut this down to two points. We've always received funding from the City of Coral Gables; I attended both the scoring meeting, which tells you how good you did last year, if there are any issues you need to address. Nothing was brought up at that meeting. We weren't told that we need to improve our festival in any way. Second thing was, when I was at the scoring meeting, I listened to all the public discussion, when it came around to our activity there is only one score that brought us down low because you needed 80 points to qualify for funding. There is one panelist for whatever reason that person had; he scored us low so that made us ineligible for funding. I respectfully asked the Board could we be considered for funding, what did we do wrong?- kind of thing. As it was close to 5 o'clock, my feeling I got was that people were in a hurry to leave, they wanted to finish up the process; they voted, we didn't get any money, and that was the end of it. My last point I'd like to point out is, we are the only Irish festival in, not only Coral Gables, but all of Miami-Dade County. We'd like to continue our festival in Coral Gables and we do ask you to reconsider the panel's recommendation of no funding and to grant us some funding. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you. Does Mr. Harrington have anything?

Mr. Harrington: I just want to reiterate that we are a 501(c)3 corporation. We do this for the love of the Irish culture. We bring the finest Irish singers, musicians, dancers, representation of Irish food...

Mayor Cason: Guinness Stout.

(Laughter)

Mr. Harrington: Everything is free to the public and we depend on money. We do our own fundraising, but whatever support we get from the City we do turn around and wind up paying the City back some of that money in the form of City services. So, I respectfully request that you reconsider our request for funding. Thank you.

Commissioner Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: How about a suggestion that we, that I would make that we forego the \$900 or whatever that would be, and then send this back to the Cultural Affairs group to take a look at and in conjunction with the other issue that we discussed about double-dipping.

Commissioner Keon: The Area Performance Gallery.

Mr. Davis: One thing I'll say is, I appreciate the \$900 that is a check that we already wrote to the City and has probably already been cashed. We did that when we went to Special Events.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Mr. Mayor it's always tricky because the Board works so hard on providing the recommendations.

Mayor Cason: I understand.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I understand if you want to remand it. If the decision of the Commission is to absorb the Special Event fee then we can issue a refund. I just caution you on opening up a discussion that others will follow in terms of challenging the findings of the Cultural Board, but we can do the desire of the Commission.

Commissioner Keon: Well, I would remand these two, I mean the two awards, the Area Performance Gallery. I wouldn't tell you how to reallocate it, but I would think that you should

look at how you might reallocate some of those. If the policy is that you can receive under – you can receive one award, they should receive one award.

Mrs. Spain: I agree.

Commissioner Keon: So do that and then I would make that motion.

Vice Mayor Quesada: To remand?

Commissioner Slesnick: To remand it back to the Board.

Commissioner Keon: Back to the Cultural Board.

Mayor Cason: Look at the two things.

Vice Mayor Quesada: But going back to what the City Manager just said, if we remand going back there, I know they spent a lot of time and it's going to throw everything in a whack again.

Commissioner Keon: No it doesn't. It's one particular grant, its \$3,000, whether they award it to somebody else, whether they...

Mrs. Spain: Are you just remanding that grant back?

Mayor Cason: Just those two pieces – approve everything else.

City Attorney Leen: You are doing a remand with instructions, very specific instructions. It's the only jurisdiction they will have.

Commissioner Keon: The policy is that only one, that each, that any group will only receive a single grant, not two grants.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: And having been a Cultural Board Secretary and having gone through this grants process, I think the Board would welcome that direction and then it would be their recommendation as to how to allocate those additional monies for...

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mrs. Spain: I think it makes a lot of sense.

Mayor Cason: So we would approve everything and those two points will go back to be remanded for discussion and come back to us the next meeting what you decided.

Vice Mayor Quesada: And I would add that with direction, my opinion is to give them \$2,500 in addition to the waiver of that fee, that's the way I feel about it. So if we want to give direction on the remand to apply it that way for that consideration?

Mayor Cason: I would say, they find a way to come up with \$3,500, we don't have to go back and recut the check, if not...

Commissioner Slesnick: As the former Chairman of the Cultural Affairs Board, all of those people work very, very hard in order to do this and I don't think it's our place to come back and recommend anything, but I do feel having two grants appropriated to one group, which far surpasses the number one placement...

Mrs. Spain: Well that was the issue for me.

Commissioner Slesnick:...that there should be some money there to pass onto the Emerald Society in order for this to equalize.

Mrs. Spain: And that Board does really work very hard. They take the applications home, they work on them, they mark them up, and so I think it's appropriate to remand that one piece back.

Mayor Cason: OK. So we have a motion from Commission Keon to that.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Second.

Mayor Cason: The Vice Mayor seconds.

City Attorney Leen: Does it include the Vice Mayor's instructions or not?

Mayor Cason: Yes.

City Attorney Leen: OK.

Commissioner Keon: It doesn't include. All it does is remand it back to the Cultural Affairs Board to reallocate the funds.

Mayor Cason: And approve all the rest of the funds.

City Attorney Leen: Just as to those two items, everything else is approved, so they have no jurisdiction to move the other items.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Correct.

Mayor Cason: Correct.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Unless they reallocate and coming back to you.

Commissioner Slesnick: But just for those two.

Mayor Cason: Just for those two.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: They are sending it back, as I understand it, they are sending back that issue to the Board and if they fund only one there will be monies left over and it will be up to the Board to provide a recommendation as to how to allocate that additional...

City Attorney Leen: Just that money, just that money. OK, it's understood.

Mrs. Spain: The Area Stage – when you say two items it's the...

Commissioner Keon: The Area Performance Gallery, Area Performance Gallery, Inc. has two grants.

Mrs. Spain: OK. Perfect. I got it.

Commissioner Keon: I don't care which one you...I'm sure it's the lesser one that they'll just assume.

Mayor Cason: So Commissioner Keon made the motion and I think it was the Vice Mayor that seconded. City Clerk.

Commissioner Slesnick: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

Commissioner Lago: Yes

Vice Mayor Quesada: Yes

Mayor Cason: Yes

(Vote: 5-0)

Mrs. Spain: Very good. Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you for waiting all day.

[End: 2:28:44 p.m.]