HISTORIC PRESERVATION BOARD CITY COMMISSION CHAMBERS 405 BILTMORE WAY CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA

RE: CASE FILE COA (SP) 2014-014



October 16, 2014 Thursday 4:00 p.m.

BEFORE:

VENNY TORRE, Chairman MAYOR DOROTHY THOMSON CARMEN GUERRERO DOLLY MACINTYRE JUDY PRUITT ALEJANDRO SILVA TONY NEWELL ROBERT PARSLEY

ALSO PRESENT:

DONA M. SPAIN
KARA KAUTZ
CINDY BIRDSILL
CAROL DAMIAN

EXCERPT OF PROCEEDINGS



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MS. SPAIN: Okay. This next one is an application for the issuance of a Special Certificate of Appropriateness for the proposed civic monument at the Segovia Traffic Circle at Coral Way as part of the city's Art in Public Places Program.

I just have a brief series of slides to show you. This is the location. There are actually two circles. This is the one that's at the intersection of North Greenway, Coral Way, Segovia. Again, showing both of the circles. The site plan. This is an elevation showing the proposed statue. And photographs. And that is the proposed statue in the circle. That's the -- that's another circle. That's the one on Biltmore Way.

And then we have a PowerPoint. And Carol Damian that was on the selections committee is here to talk about it.

MS. BIRDSILL: Before Carol speaks, I'm Cindy Birdsill. I am the acting assistant city manager. And Dr. Damian, who will give you a little bit more background when she talks, was on our judging panel of five citizens who watched five semi-finalists, who are all nationally known public artists, present their ideas for the — the circles. And the judging

panel has selected this -- this artist's work and what they would like to recommend it to the city commission.

And as Dona said, this is before you because one of the two circles is historically designated and needs a Certificate of Appropriateness.

So I will let Carol take it away.

MS. DAMIAN: Thank you. I'm Carol Damian and I live at 1150 North Greenway Drive. So this is absolutely in my neighborhood. I see it every day. And so I take this very seriously. Absolutely.

I am director and the chief curator at the Frost Art Museum at Florida International University. I'm an art historian. I have been teaching art and working in the arts community for more years than I want to admit, first at the University of Miami and then at FIU. I also sit on the Miami-Dade County Public Trust for Art in Public Places. I also run the Art in State Buildings at Florida International University, which in the last 20 years has included the placement of art in over 40 buildings. And those of you who know FIU know that I'm not kidding. That's the way it's growing. We have now 60,000 students and lots of buildings.

So with that, I just want to tell you that I

feel very qualified to make these comments about this
work. When, as Cindy said, the panel, the
Professional Advisory Panel, which is like a branch
of the Cultural Advisory Board, on which I sat for
many, many years as well, was presented with this
short list, we looked at a lot of applications for
these projects for the circle. And when we were
presented with the short list of five absolutely
world famous artists, it was really incredible.
Very, very impressive. When this work that I'm gonna
show you now, I think. I'm showing there but not
here.

MS. BIRDSILL: It's showing on the television.

MS. DAMIAN: Oh, it doesn't show on that screen?

MS. BIRDSILL: No.

MS. DAMIAN: Okay. Okay. I'm sorry.

When we were presented with the work by Alice

Aycock, we unanimously -- I don't -- I don't think we

even had much of a discussion about it. It was like

we could not believe this work. Most of us are

accustomed to seeing art that -- Should I do this?

Is this better?

MS. SPAIN: No. Use the remote control.

MS. DAMIAN: Okay. So which one would you like to look at? It seems like I'm getting two different

things here.

MS. BIRDSILL: Yes. It's set up differently. So yeah, this is -- just use the clicker.

MS. DAMIAN: Okay. So the work that I'm going to show you is by the artist Alice Aycock, who is a New York artist, but she is an artist who's worked all over the world. She has an incredible reputation and is a very, very professional artist. She's worked on huge public projects for many, many years. One of the most extraordinary I'm gonna show you in a -- in a few minutes. She was -- you don't need to -- I guess this is kind of small. Do you have this in front of you? You do, right? So this very small writing over there, I won't worry about it. You can see what it is.

MS. BIRDSILL: They may not. I just have one copy, but you can pass it down.

MR. TORRE: I don't have that.

MS. DAMIAN: So do you have the proposal, the site specific proposal?

MR. SILVA: Yes.

MR. TORRE: Yes.

MS. DAMIAN: So the proposal is site specific and that means it's for a site. It's intended as a complement to the formal historical architecture and

landscape of Coral Gables, especially what we're discussing today is the appropriateness of it in an historic location, which is at this particular circle.

The composition is asymmetrical and fantastical. Its shapes are taken in part from the Passiflora, the passion flower, and the burst of lights that fireworks create. It's scaled to a gigantic size. The work references satellites, antennas and mechanical robotic floral objects. The intention of the work is to catch the attention of the viewer from a distance as they travel by car and move through the roundabout and to operate as a signature piece announcing the visitor's arrival to this part of the Coral Gables community. The work is painted in various color palettes to enhance the details of the piece and to complement the context of the surrounding buildings and greenery.

It's installed in -- right on that grassy circle in the -- in between Coral Way, Segovia and North Greenway.

So we've already seen the maps.

It is based on and inspired by the Passiflora. So here is an historic picture, a botanical drawing of the Passiflora. And we did learn from Alice when

she gave her presentation that she is a master gardener. And that one of the reasons she loved Coral Gables so much was because of our garden tradition. And also, she was fascinated by Fairchild Tropical Botanical Garden, of course, as is everybody, and by passion flowers there. And so it seemed kind of natural as she was thinking what can I do in this location to choose the flower as her inspiration.

And as I said, we have really -- This is the other circle. We have never really -- There's the flower. Different dimensions of the flowers. And this is the flower as it would be located in the circle. So is it's as if she takes the arrangement, the blossoms of the Passiflora on the one circle, and she drops one of the blossoms on this particular circle. And so it's -- there's whimsy. It's very whimsical. But certainly you can still identify that it is a flower. Here you can see some other views of it.

The landscaping is gonna be very important here. Needless to say, landscaping and lighting will be very important. It's such --

MAYOR THOMSON: This is the Coral Way. This is the Coral Way Circle.

MS. DAMIAN: This is Coral Way.

MAYOR THOMSON: An array of them is on the Biltmore side.

MS. DAMIAN: Exactly. Exactly. So this is Coral Way. So you're looking at between Coral -- Segovia, Coral Way, North Greenway.

MAYOR THOMSON: Yes.

MS. DAMIAN: So this is another view of what it would look like. Not necessarily the landscaping, because remember she's just sort of PowerPointed her work inside the existing circle. It would probably have to have more complementary landscaping that goes along with it.

So as you can see, I mean it's a very simple idea. It's dropping a flower in the middle of this circle. And using the colors of the surrounding buildings and the entranceway to North Greenway Drive, that -- that -- to the Coral Gables Country Club, as the inspiration for the colors as well. So you have the historic colors, the Coral Gables colors that are part of the flower and are naturally part of the flower as well. You can see -- see that.

I wanted to show you some of the work that this artist has done and why we would be so proud to have her in Coral Gables. The last big project she did

was Park Avenue. As you may or may not know, for the last ten years the Park Avenue Public Arts Commission has commissioned some of the most extraordinary artists in the world to place their work in the median down Park Avenue. And if any of you have been on Park Avenue in the last few years, you probably have seen some of this work.

So last year Alice did this project, which looks -- she called it Paper Chase. And it looks like coils of paper were just placed all the way down Park Avenue. Of course, this is not coils of paper. This is metal. So it's a very, very large project. But look at them. They're quite amazing.

This one's -- so she loves flowers. And the floral shape, even with the way she works with paper and metals, you can always see they're inspired by nature and very, very organic.

Here's another one. Here's a piece that she's placed in a garden location.

This was in Broward County, Florida, the Waterworks sculpture in Broward.

And here's another one. I think what you see with this work is how versatile she is. She is an artist that changes as she is inspired by a particular location and takes that location very

seriously. And this is what impressed us about her,
that she studied Coral Gables. She visited. She's a
gardener. And she wanted to bring something that was
very unique. So some of us are really accustomed to
I think that might be here's a light piece.
She's working with light, too. A little bit of
everything. Inside a gallery. And some other
pieces. So I think one of the things, as I said,
that impressed us so much about about her was her
sensitivity to where we are, to the historic nature
of the Gables and the beauty of the Gables, and to
create something that is so different. I don't think
any of you have ever seen anything like this. And
certainly, we never saw anything like this. It just
blew us away. We were like we didn't know what to
do. We were speechless when we saw this presentation
and heard her, because she's incredibly articulate
and professional about her work. And thought this is
like what we might describe as a destination
sculpture. People will really want to see this.
They will come to this part of the Gables to see this
work. It is not what we often in the Art in Public
Places world describe as plop art, which means you
could take a piece of art and plop it anywhere and it
really doesn't matter. And we know we see a lot of

that around. Right? Then you think, oh, my gosh, where did this come from. It's just another, you know, bunch of chopsticks or something like that that they plopped.

MAYOR THOMSON: Carol, I'd like to ask you a couple questions.

MS. DAMIAN: Sure.

MAYOR THOMSON: Again, what are the colors of the flowers on -- I know the one that you had mentioned, the single one, the one that blew away from the others sort of replicates the colors of the dark, rustic and so forth. What are the colors of the ones on Biltmore Way?

And the other question I have, I think there's mention that there's going to be mist and spray and so forth with this, too, water of some sort. And how about lighting? I'd like to ask those questions.

MS. DAMIAN: Lighting is very important. She has put that in -- in her budget. She knows the lighting is very important. And in the big circle, it's actually gonna sit in a pool of water.

MAYOR THOMSON: That's Biltmore Way.

MS. DAMIAN: And those -- that's the Biltmore.

MAYOR THOMSON: Yes.

MS. DAMIAN: The Biltmore Circle. And it is

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also going to include more blues and greens in it.

MAYOR THOMSON: Okay.

MS. DAMIAN: But they will complement each other. So she will pick up the colors from one place to another. The passion flower is the color of the passion flower. So it's more the pinks and the coral colors with -- with yellow.

And there is a misting element that she described to us. But I don't, you know, I don't think that's really been fully realized how that is going to work. But yes, there is a misting element as well.

MR. SILVA: I really like the project. I think it's kind of a cheeky reference to Coral Gables landscaping and Frank Button. I think it's great. My only question is how they decided on which circle got which. Like obviously one is more substantial.

MS. DAMIAN: Yes.

MR. SILVA: And it would seem to be the Coral Way one should -- should -- I was just curious as to how she arrived at how to split up the work.

MS. DAMIAN: I think she was looking at the surrounding architecture. Because when you think of it, the buildings on the Biltmore Circle are set back, except for Northern Trust. The other buildings

are set back a little bit. So you have a wider vista. And especially as -- remember, all of this is predicated on the vision of the driver and how you come to these circles. So she was looking at the opportunity on the Biltmore Circle for a more substantial piece because you have a longer way. I think driving from -- down Segovia Circle to it, or even, what is that, Biltmore Way, as you come to the Biltmore Circle. Whereas in the Coral Way Circle it's much more intimate. It's enclosed. There's not a lot -- even though you have a golf course there, that golf course is blocked by signage and fountains. So it's -- it's a more intimate location. So that is why she -- she chose one over the other.

MS. GUERRERO: I think it's a wonderful contribution to the city. I think it's joyful. I think it's abstract. It's recognizable. I think it's a positive contribution.

I do have a question. Will she be involved with the landscaping decisions? Will she collaborate with the landscape -- landscape designer or will she be the one taking care of that?

MS. DAMIAN: I think that -- correct, she does that with Coral Gables. She is a -- she is not only an artist, a sculptor, but she is a land -- designer

of gardens and she is a gardener. So how much involvement, I'm not quite sure.

Cindy, maybe you can answer that. I think that has to do with the city.

MS. BIRDSILL: Yes. Actually, Public Works is expecting to work very closely with the artist and her -- and her design team. This is obviously at a conceptual design stage. She has engineers who are going to have to work out how the fountain systems are gonna work. But we wouldn't -- she's not invested time and money in that, you know, until the concept is selected. But Public Works is expected to assist.

And we also talked about creating a little bit of a median strip between the two circles. They've looked at it. They think that we have plenty of room to do that. It allows a little strip of landscape that will connect the circles even more. So as Carol was saying, the selection of plant material is going to be very important to -- to how everything functions together.

MR. TORRE: I do have --

MAYOR THOMSON: And what is the timetable on all this? I know it has to go through the, you know, maybe other boards beside the Commission, too, or

that's it?

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MS. BIRDSILL: No, no. It will go to the Commission next.

MAYOR THOMSON: Okay.

MS. BIRDSILL: And what Carol didn't have an opportunity to say, the other judges on the judging panel included Nanette Zapata who does -- she's also a resident. She does the programming, artistic programming at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden.

MAYOR THOMSON: Okay.

MS. BIRDSILL: Fairchild was a partner with the city in applying for a National Endowment for the Arts Grant that we received for this project, which is also gonna be very exciting nationally.

And then we had Julio Grabiel, who also lives in the neighborhood, is an architect and also ==

MS. DAMIAN: On South Greenway.

MS. BIRDSILL: Yes. And he sits on the county's Art in Public Places Board along with Carol.

Silvia Cubina, who is the director of the Bass
Museum. And also lives -- she has a view of the
Biltmore Way Circle from her apartment.

And Brian Durshum --

MS. DAMIAN: Brian Durshum.

MS. BIRDSILL: -- from the Lowe Museum. He just

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1	retired, but also lives in the neighborhood.
2	So we had a very distinguished panel who who
3	reviewed this. So that was the main board that
4	that looked at this.
5	And then Historic for the Segovia Circle Plaza.
6	And then to Commission.
7	MAYOR THOMSON: And the monies have been
8	committed and appropriated already, right?
9	MS. BIRDSILL: Yes, they have.
10	MAYOR THOMSON: So the timeline will be probably
11	within the next year then.
12	MS. DAMIAN: Hopefully.
13	MS. BIRDSILL: Yes.
14	MAYOR THOMSON: Good.
15	MS. BIRDSILL: Yes. Assuming yeah. She
16	still has to engineer it. So depending how much time
17	that takes. But
18	MR. TORRE: I have some questions. Anybody
19	else?
20	MS. MaCINTYRE: I think it's gonna feel like you
21	need to be reversed, the smaller one in the smaller

MS. DAMIAN: I think really that had to do with the site lines. The site lines. But, you know, I don't think she would be adverse to discussing it,

circle and the bigger one in the bigger circle.

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because she has a lot of --

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MS. SPAIN: Well, I addressed that in the staff report. I actually thought that the scale of this is -- is more in keeping with the residential surroundings. And that -- that the other is -- is larger and it's in a more commercial and the higher buildings. I mean, Northern Trust is on a highrise site. So that could very easily be a larger building. So, you know, twenty years from now I think it will be more in keeping having the larger one there. Staff is obviously recommending in favor of this.

MR. TORRE: I'd like two minutes. We have Ms. Birdsill here today. And I really wanted to ask a couple questions. So if you could come up, I have a question.

This is a great project, by the way.

MS. BIRDSILL: Okay.

MR. TORRE: I'd love to see more of these.

As it relates to the city ordinance for Art in Public Places, does this fall into -- I'm going to lead to my question in a minute. I've been asking Dona this over and over. The budget for Art in Public Places I know has some historic piece to it in terms of the funds. Could you explain to us what

that is?

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MS. BIRDSILL: I can explain how the ordinance --

MR. TORRE: I know I've asked so many times.

And I've never been able to have you here on board,
so.

MS. BIRDSILL: Sure. Absolutely. And the funding for this particular project is out of the Neighborhood Renaissance Program Funds and also the NEA grant that we got. So this is actually not using the Art in Public Places fund.

MR. TORRE: Okay.

MS. BIRDSILL: But the way our Art in Public
Places Program works, there are two components.

Developers who do commercial development that's over
a million dollars in value have to put one percent of
their project budget into public art. They can
either incorporate that into their project, in which
case they go through a process of going to the Arts
Advisory Panel, the Cultural Development Board, the
Board of Architects and then Commission for approval
of what they want to do. Or they donate to our fund.
And then we have a five-year master plan of various
projects that we would like to do. So our
streetscape project, for example, we're hoping to

incorporate a lot of public art in that. And we would be using the Art in Public Places fund for that.

Now, when the city does its own construction, and there's -- I think the threshold is \$250,000 of -- of a new facility, they have to put one and a half percent into public art. So it's a little bit confusing because the county ordinance requires one and a half percent for a new municipal building. And ours only a one percent. So what our ordinance says is if it's a city project that requires us to comply with the county ordinance, we'll put one percent into the Historic Art Fund and five percent into the Art in Public Places Fund is for new art. The Historic Public Fund -- Public Art Fund is to restore and purchase historic -- items of historic value. So that this board would have to review the spending on that fund.

MR. TORRE: But that -- those funds have started to be accumulated or not?

MS. BIRDSILL: Yes, they have.

MR. TORRE: They have. So there's already a kitty that starts to hold money that we may be able to involve ourselves in - in the selection?

MS. BIRDSILL: That's correct. It would be

1	available for preservation of civic monuments,
2	fountains. I know we expanded the definition of what
3	historic art was recently. I'm sure Dona can give
4	that to you, so that you have an idea. But we
5	expanded it so you could also purchase items of the
6	1920's era.
7	MR. TORRE: Can we initiate those projects? Are
8	those initiated by you or by another
9	MS. BIRDSILL: That would be between that
10	would be Dona's staff and you all.
11	MR. TORRE: When do we start using that money?
12	MS. DAMIAN: You wanted to fix the fountain,
13	right?
14	MR. TORRE: I just wanted to know more about
15	what it is.
16	MS. SPAIN: I'm trying to get the amount to
17	bring to you from the Building Department. Once I
18	have that amount, and we're working on that, then
19	I'll bring it to you and we can discuss what we can
20	use what we can use it for.
21	MR. TORRE: So it's held by which department
22	specifically or which
23	MS. SPAIN: Well, the account
24	MR. TORRE: Controlled by?

MS. SPAIN:

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The --

MR. TORRE: Finance Department controls it?

MS. SPAIN: Yeah. The account is set up by the Finance Department.

MR. TORRE: And it goes towards you?

MS. SPAIN: And when the Building Department, when it's -- gets the building -- the money for the project, it allocates money into that account.

MR. TORRE: For example, the tennis court renovation would have a fund.

MS. SPAIN: That's right.

MR. TORRE: That's one. This circle on Coral Way would be another.

MS. SPAIN: Yes.

MR. TORRE: And the restoration of those fountains -- those are the ones we're talking about.

MS. SPAIN: Yes. Yes. It doesn't even have to be the ones that come here. It's -- it's any city project. So it doesn't have to be just the historic projects.

MS. MaCINTYRE: May I ask the cost of this project?

MS. SPAIN: This project?

MS. BIRDSILL: Sure. It's \$1,040,000. And if the artist chooses to take advantage of it, Fairchild has also offered an additional \$35,000 worth of in

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MR. TORRE: Just so we become more educated, what -- who triggers the beginning of these projects? Who initiates the Art in Public Places projects? Is it your department to do so?

MS. BIRDSILL: Yeah, it would be my department. But like I said, we had a five-year master plan that has been adopted by the Commission. So we had art consultants who helped us put together at the same time of our guidelines an idea of where we should start as far as projects.

MR. TORRE: These are gonna keep going, keep coming, which is nice.

MS. BIRDSILL: Yeah.

MR. TORRE: That's what I was looking to hear. These are great.

MS. BIRDSILL: Yes.

MR. TORRE: Fantastic. Good.

MS. SPAIN: Can I ask if you're going to vote for this, if you could include the future landscaping in that, or if you want that to come back, or if you leave it up to staff working with Public Works.

Whatever you want. But there needs to be some mention of the landscaping in the future.

MR. TORRE: That would - if it was up to me, I'd

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23 leave it to staff. 1 MAYOR THOMSON: Yeah. 2 MS. SPAIN: That would make it easier. 3 MAYOR THOMSON: I would think so. And expedite 4 5 things. I just would like to have it on the 6 MS. SPAIN: 7 record. So that we're not putting --MR. TORRE: So let's make -- whoever makes the 8 9 motion --MS. SPAIN: -- putting landscaping out there. 10 MR. TORRE: -- add that as a postscript. 11 12 MS. MaCINTYRE: I move approval, with staff 13 having the right to approve landscaping. MS. GUERRERO: I second the motion. 14 MR. TORRE: We've got a motion and a second. 15 16 THE SECRETARY: Ready? Ready? Yes? 17 MR. TORRE: Yeah, you can go ahead. I'm so sorry. I thought you heard. 18 19 THE SECRETARY: Mr. Newell? 20 MR. NEWELL: Yes. THE SECRETARY: Ms. Pruitt? 21 22 MS. PRUITT: Yes. 23 THE SECRETARY: Ms. Guerrero? 24 MS. GUERRERO: Yes. THE SECRETARY: Mr. Parsley? 25

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1	MR. PARSLEY: Yes.	
2	THE SECRETARY: Mayor Thomson?	
3	MAYOR THOMSON: Yes.	
4	THE SECRETARY: Ms. MaCintyre?	
5	MS. MaCINTYRE: Yes.	
6	THE SECRETARY: Mr. Silva?	
7	MR. SILVA: Yes.	
8	THE SECRETARY: Mr. Torre?	
9	MR. TORRE: Yes.	
10	MS. BIRDSILL: Okay. Thank you very much.	
11	MR. TORRE: Thank you.	
12	MS. SPAIN: Thank you.	
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25 1 CERTIFICATE 2 3 STATE OF FLORIDA COUNTY OF BROWARD 4 5 I, LILLIAN GADOMSKI, Registered Professional 6 7 Reporter and Notary Public, certify that I was authorized 8 to and did stenographically report the foregoing 9 proceedings, and that the transcript is a true and 10 complete record of my stenographic notes. 11 12 Dated this 22nd day of October, 2014. 13 14 15 16 17 LILLIAN GADOMSKI, RPR Notary Public - State of Florida 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25