

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item C-1
July 9, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Historic Preservation Officer, Dona Spain

Public Speaker(s)

John Allen, Coral Gables Museum

Agenda Item C-1 [9:33:58 a.m.]

A presentation of the Coral Gables Museum Art Basel 2019 Program

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Next we have a presentation of the Coral Gables Museum Art Basel 2019 Program.

Mr. John Allen: Thank you so much. John Allen, the Director of the Coral Gables Museum is here with me and our Chairman Lyn Bower, is also here. We'd like to present to you and just sort of keep you up to date on what the Museum of Coral Gables, the museum that belongs to everyone in the City, as to what we are doing. Last year for the first time, we were able to participate in the Art Basel events and this year we are participating once again, which is great for the museum and for the City to put the City on the map of the Art Basel, we will be on all the programs. We have circulated our program. With this year, the museum is doing, its primarily Venezuelan. I think its very appropriate with the influx of the Venezuelan community into Miami and Coral Gables, that

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we recognize the arts of the Venezuelan diaspora and this year we are bringing a collection from the Sofaric Museum of Caracas, called “El Biaje” The Journey, it’s a show that was owned by the museum in Caracas that shows the plight and the travel of the diaspora and getting out and its call The Journey. Together with that, we are also doing a show of contemporary Venezuelan artists that are in Miami, exiles that are all in Miami, and we are going to be taking over the whole museum and its going to be a wonderful exhibit. Last year, we did Cuban artists here from the United States. This year, we are doing Venezuelan, and our goal is to try to recognize throughout a several year period all the communities that we have in our City and in Miami and welcome them all and show their arts at the museum. This year we will be having, the program was supposed to start with a visit to Art in Public Places, but they asked us to take it off of our agenda, and we will have a 10 to 11:30 meet at the Coral Gables Museum with a feature artist. We are going to do a Venezuelan breakfast.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: They asked you to take what off the agenda?

Mr. Allen: Well you have the memo. They asked us to not include them in our – I have the e-mail. It says, we respectfully ask that it be removed from the museum’s notice, because it is not open to the public and to avoid any confusion. Apparently, the Art in Public Places event in the City is by invitation only, so its not open to the public to come see the work. This year Art in Public Places is doing a Venezuelan artist also, which is wonderful for the whole, so that the whole City becomes – Venezuelan artist, it’s a very prominent Venezuelan artist by the name of Rafael Barrios. So, we will be doing all those at the museum, and then afterwards we’ll be having an artist talk at the museum, and then there will be a reception at my house for the artist and VIP’s and primarily everyone that wants to come.

Commissioner Keon: Mayor, I thought the issue was the invitation, it wasn’t an Art in Public Places, it has always been Art Basel has always been a VIP event that was by invitation only.

Mr. Allen: Well, Art Basel’s rules are that whatever you do does not – I was one of founders of Art Basel. What Art Basel’s rules are is that whatever is done does not compete with their opening hours, and the hours that they are opening. So, they are open at noon.

Commissioner Keon: Right.

Mr. Allen: That is – they are open at noon and whether people get invited or not, is not my, we are not involved with Art in Public Places. We just want to make sure that the Coral Gables Museum, which is a museum of the City, gets its due and a seat at the table during the Art Basel events.

Commissioner Keon: I understand, but I thought in the past, the events that we had here at City Hall that were the Art Basel events, I thought that they were by invitation, were they in the past?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: They were in the street in front or they were...

Commissioner Keon: They one in the street.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: The other one was at this park, whatever park in Miracle Mile, so basically, it's a park.

Commissioner Keon: Right. I know its various places, but I thought they were by invitation the event.

Preservation Officer Spain: I can clarify this, I think.

Mr. Allen: That's not what my understanding having been involved with Art Basel is that why would you do, why would you unveil a public project that is by invitation only?

Commissioner Keon: The issue is I don't really care one way or the other. I'm only saying that historically I think that's what it was, so I think maybe that's what we were speaking to.

Preservation Officer Spain: I believe, and I may have this wrong, Catherine's here and she can clarify if I get it wrong. But I think the issue was that we need to make an application, the applications, I think went in August, and so, I'm sure that the application that the museum is going to put into Art Basel will be approved. It's a wonderful program and its very exciting. I think the concern was that you were including our VIP event in that application, because we are putting our own separate application into Art Basel. We actually have an e-mail here from Stephanie Reid. It says, this e-mail is to confirm that Art Basel supports the artist project in the City of Coral Gables as in past years. The art project is organized by the City of Coral Gables as a destination for an international audience. We advertise in publications, the officially sanction partner events to encourage visitors to enjoy experiences beyond the fair. Since 2016 our visitors have looked forward to the City of Coral Gables presentation of the art projects that are hosted in conjunction with the Lowe Museum of Art on Sunday. The show this year that's Sunday, December 8, 2019. The artist that the Lowe is using this year is not something that would be we are able to coordinate with. We actually are working with Rafael Barrios and you all approved the site on LeJeune Road for his monumental piece. So, it's our intent to apply for Art Basel and have that VIP event somewhere close to that monumental piece. The artist is also doing, I believe, and we're meeting with him this week, a temporary piece for the museum plaza, and also, we would like to have some type of an exhibit, a show that the museum might agree to, of his work, possibly the process in the

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museum. So, we absolutely are working with them that will be part of our application. We just didn't want to mix the two.

Commissioner Keon: So, there are two separate events.

Preservation Officer Spain: I believe two separate applications to Art Basel.

Commissioner Keon: Oh, I see.

Mr. Allen: I would like to clear up something, and therefore the reason why we are here. We at the museum do not want a repeat of what happened last year. Last year we, if you recall Dona, last year we said that we wanted to be involved in Art Basel; Art Basel said that if the Art in Public Places and the Lowe agreed, because the Art in Public Places has traditionally worked with the Lowe and not the Coral Gables Museum, that if we could get it done then we could participate and that there was no issue. And we had a lot of problems with the Lowe wanting to be number one and us trying to sneak in there somewhere. So, this year, we said last year this is not going to happen again, and we are going to get our seat at the table right at the beginning, and we are going to go on record of what we are doing for Art Basel. We love the Lowe, we love the University of Miami, but our first interest is the City Museum of Coral Gables and that is our goal, and that is why we want to present it and make sure that everyone is aware of what we are doing.

Commissioner Keon: You know, sometimes from one person's perspective is a very problematic and troublesome issue, from others they didn't even notice it, so I'm sorry that it was problematic for you. But these are two separate events Mayor?

Preservation Officer Spain: I honestly don't think there should be an issue.

Commissioner Keon: Because they are two separate events.

Preservation Officer Spain: I'm not sure what he's asking for.

Commissioner Keon: When is your event? When is the event you are hosting?

Mr. Allen: Our event is fine with the Art in Public Places. There is no overlap or anything, there is no overlap.

Commissioner Keon: So, there are two separate events.

Mr. Allen: Yes, there are two separate events, but we wanted to try to join them so that after the Art in Public Places event, people would come to the Coral Gables Museum.

Preservation Officer Spain: We don't have an issue with it.

Mr. Allen: And they don't have an issue with it this year and we will participate so that we are number one for the City of Coral Gables Art in Public Places.

Commissioner Keon: OK. So, let me understand. We do the event in the morning like they do early in the morning and then to follow, so it's the same day.

Mr. Allen: Correct.

Commissioner Keon: OK. I wasn't understanding. Two different times but the same day and one's to follow the other.

Mr. Allen: Yes. Correct.

Commissioner Keon: Oh, OK.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Thank you. Any questions? Very good presentation.

Vice Mayor Lago: I want to make sure its clear, because I feel like we ended up, I don't know if we resolved this. Do you feel like we resolved this?

Commissioner Keon: It wasn't clear to me.

Vice Mayor Lago: Are you happy with the outcome?

Mr. Allen: Yes.

Commissioner Keon: OK.

Mr. Allen: If it stays this way because already, I'm hearing in the e-mail about us not doing anything against the Lowe.

Vice Mayor Lago: Let me explain to you why I just brought it up, dovetail off of Commissioner Keon's comments. We only have one meeting next month and I know that time is of the essence, as a result of things that go to print.

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Preservation Officer Spain: That's why we are meeting with the artist this week.

Vice Mayor Lago: Art Basel happens the first week in December, so if we don't get this ironed out, I would hate for anything to hurt the museum. We have a significant investment in the museum and I'm not talking about financially, which we do every year, but culturally and I think it's a critical part of this community; and I also want to make sure that we do right by Mr. Barrios and what we've selected as a Commission. So, I want to make sure that it benefits the museum and it also plays well with the City.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I think everybody is happy with the result.

Vice Mayor Lago: If you have any concerns, please make sure you write the Commission as-a-whole, because I want to make sure that we move forward and there aren't any snags on this.

Commissioner Keon: Well, I think you can assure maybe now, that it will all work.

Mr. Allen: Its all fine now. I just don't want to be...

Commissioner Keon: Any undertones or anything else.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much. Good presentation John.

Commissioner Mena: Just to clarify because I'm reading the e-mail. Will it be on the museum's notice or not? - is that really the question here?

Mr. Allen: We have been asked not to put it on the museum's notice.

Preservation Officer Spain: Once we have the location and everything, you certainly can say following the VIP event with the City, we just didn't want it part of his application, it's confusing.

Commissioner Mena: OK. Is there an issue with that?

Mr. Allen: Ours is not an application, ours is a notice, because we have already been acknowledged...

Preservation Officer Spain: Follow the rules that everyone else does in Art Basel. Aren't you going to put your own separate application in?

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Mr. Allen: Absolutely. It's been done.

Preservation Officer Spain: OK. I thought the solicitation was in August.

Mr. Allen: Umm?

Preservation Officer Spain: I believe the applications go in, in August.

Mr. Allen: She said that she recognized that she had her application and that it would be put, that you wanted the month of July too, but it's already been done.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: OK. So, we are all set and thank you very much.

Preservation Officer Spain: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Its always good when you bring John, he makes wonderful presentations.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you John.

[End: 9:47:07 a.m.]