

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item D-1
January 24, 2012
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

City Commission

Mayor Jim Cason

Vice Mayor William H. Kerdyk, Jr.

Commissioner Maria Anderson

Commissioner Rafael “Ralph” Cabrera, Jr.

Commissioner Frank Quesada

City Staff

City Manager, Patrick Salerno

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Christina Manrique, Architectural Design Instructor, Gulliver Preparatory

Emiliano Zurita, Student, Gulliver Preparatory Architecture Program

Sasha Kayal, Student, Gulliver Preparatory Architecture Program

Shiori Sageshima, Student, Gulliver Preparatory Architecture Program

D-1 [Start: 9:26:07 a.m.]

Emiliano Zurita, Sasha Kayal and Shiori Sageshima, students of the Gulliver Preparatory Architecture Program; Hank Langston, Dean of Faculty/Director of University, Corporate and Community Affairs; and Christina Manrique, Architectural Design Instructor, to present their project on the Alhambra Water Tower restoration.

Mayor Cason: Well we are happy today to have under Item D-1, students from Gulliver Preparatory Architecture Program to present a project that they have been working on regarding the Alhambra Water Tower landscaping. So, I would invite students to come forward, introduce yourselves, and please make your presentation. We are looking forward to it.

Christina Manrique: Good morning...[inaudible – off mic]...encourage our students to work with community projects in preservation, sustainability, and environmental science. Today and this year actually they have been presented with a challenge, creating a presentation for the restoration of the Alhambra Water Tower, and we have three students that will be presenting to you. We have Emiliano Zurita, Sasha Kayal and Shiori Sageshima. So they will be taking over.

Mayor Cason: Great.

Emiliano Zurita: Good morning I am Emiliano Zurita, Sasha Kayal and Shiori Sageshima we worked on the...[inaudible]...from Gulliver Preparatory Architecture Program, and going with the idea that...[inaudible]...we wanted to take on the project of restoring the Alhambra Water Tower as well as propose a whole new site in itself. For the Water Tower itself we are proposing a paint job, restoration of the doors and windows, rebuilding the second and third floor balcony railings, and also later on we would like to explore the possibility of making the tower structure sound for occupancy, so as to put a small museum of the water tower of the restoration process inside the tower; and also we wanted to make the entrances of the tower itself more aesthetically pleasing for the visitors of the tower and inviting if we are to put the small museum inside, and for the site as-a-whole, we are proposing new landscaping walkways, benches, irrigation, and lighting systems, and we really want to emphasize the importance of making it a pedestrian-friendly, safe site; and now Sasha will talk to you more about the...[inaudible].

Sasha Kayal: Good morning. My name is Sasha Kayal...[inaudible]...my main contribution to the project...[inaudible]...existing vegetation on the site. We've decided that based on wind tolerance...[inaudible]...we are proposing...coconut palm trees to line the path to the walkways, because they have high wind tolerance and low maintenance which makes the palms the best selection for the path. We are also...the royal palm...even though it has high maintenance and low resistance; we want to use it for its beauty...of the Coral Gables Water Tower. We also are looking to add local flowers to add color and beauty. The three flowers we are proposing are the...rose, the white Ixora and the....All these plants have high...high wind tolerance, and low maintenance. In addition, we want to...plants with...their upkeep. Ixoras are...for all walkways in the sitting areas like the City of Coral Gables public spaces. The colors of the flowers will complement the colors of the tower...

Shiori Sageshima: Good morning. My name is Shiori Sageshima and I'm speaking to you about...[inaudible]. Although the tower is...we'd like to propose a new...based on our own research...[inaudible – off mic]...also the...throughout our research we have found that...most capable...We would like to reinstate the sun dial not included in the rock formation, we would like to reinstate this design because of its intricacy and the Moroccan design. We strongly believe that the...restoration because of its credentials and beneficial qualities, and now....

Emiliano Zurita: For the site to site we wanted to concentrate on the precedence of the City of Coral Gables...as well as make sure to project the Moroccan architectural style of the tower itself unto the whole site. So for the walkways, as you can see here, the tower has an octagonal shape to it, so we wanted to project that into the walkways to make it balance more with the whole site; and we also did concentrate on making the path and the social area have a natural fluidity to it, and this one you can see by the palm trees. For the benches we are proposing – one would be the stone benches which have a more natural feel to them, and then the plastic benches have a Moroccan style and the same colored patterns as the tower itself, so it really makes...For the irrigation system, we are proposing a retractable sprinkler system with adjustable spray range radius. The spray radius in this site goes from 5 feet to 20 feet with...360 degree spray range. We have change in spray radii just because we want to minimize the amount of water that is wasted with overlap and going into the walkways and the street to make it more ecologically friendly, and the retractable system is just to minimize the amount of damage that visitors could do to the sprinkler system and to minimize the danger that the sprinkler system would pose on the visitors, as well as to keep the aesthetics of the landscape. This you can see is the irrigation system and it is all controlled with a solar panel pump and the solar panels are also in the lighting systems. We are aware that the water tower has four lights that shine on the tower itself, but since we are proposing the whole site that makes it more beautiful as-a-whole, we wanted to ensure that at any time of the day it's well lit and inviting to the visitors. We also noticed that a lot of people jog and cycle by the Alhambra Water Tower, so we installed a small water fountain in the center to invite the joggers to also relax by the site itself. We also noticed that the southern vantage point was the perfect way to see the whole site, to see the whole tower, so we wanted to incorporate a small plaque that tells the history about the Water Tower and about the restoration process, so people can see the whole site and also learn about the Water Tower, and then to emphasize to make it a pedestrian-friendly, safe environment we added a curve so that would minimize the amount of parking, it would actually completely take it out, no cars would be able to park, so it would 1) help the irrigation, the landscaping and the walkways be intact, as well as provide a safe environment for all the visitors, they wouldn't have to worry about cars parking; and it also actually eases the traffic flow. Right now a lot of cars park there and create more traffic in the area. As you can see the students in the urban planning class at Gulliver Prep, we put a lot of hard work and dedication and creative thinking into not only restoring the Water Tower to its full glory, but to also...it in a new and beautiful site that doesn't only allow visitors to see the tower, but also the site itself to employ the nice parkland environment...So thank you for your patience for providing us with...We'd like to thank Mrs. Kendell Turner for introducing us to this opportunity, Ms. Manrique and Mr. Langston for providing guidance...and of course the Commissioners and the Mayor for allowing us this opportunity to...

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you.

Mayor Cason: Thank you very much. (Applause) I'd like to commend you all first of all for your poise and its kind of intimidating sometimes to make a presentation before the Commission, you did a wonderful job (Applause), and also for the – it's obvious how much effort and thought you put into this. When did you start the project?

Emiliano Zurita: We actually started, last year we started seeing the area, we visited the Water Tower, took some surveys, and then from the beginning of this year we started the project. We worked on the 2-D and 3-D layout for the whole semester. We finished actually printing about a week ago.

Mayor Cason: Fabulous.

Commissioner Anderson: Beautiful.

Mayor Cason: I'm wondering what's next. Are you going to make a presentation to the Landscape Advisory Committee, which would be nice.

Commissioner Cabrera: Landscape Beautification Board and Historic Preservation.

Mayor Cason:...Beautification and Historic Preservation. Any other thoughts from...?

Commissioner Cabrera: Well I just have one question. I think you all hit it out of the park, so congratulations to each and every one of you. I just have one quick question, when you talked about the plaque which was very interesting, there is an existing plaque there, what are your plans for that plaque?

Emiliano Zurita: Well the plaque does contain some information about the Water Tower, but since the plaque I believe is next to the Poinciana in the center of the site, since we are making – we are making a social path around the Poinciana – we did want to include a plaque there talking about the Poinciana, how it was donated by the...

Commissioner Cabrera: Garden Club.

Emiliano Zurita:...and since we still wanted to include the history, we thought the vantage point was the perfect place to put it.

Commissioner Cabrera: So see what happens, that's a historic, historical plaque, I'm sorry, state issued. So keep in mind that there might be some conditions associated with it, or there may not be, I don't know, but just keep that in mind. But Really great job.

Emiliano Zurita: Thank you.

Commissioner Anderson: What are you all going to study?- what grades are you in?- and are you all going to study architecture or planning?

Emiliano Zurita: All of us are seniors at the moment, I'm personally going to study architecture.

Sasha Kayal: Me as well.

Commissioner Anderson: Where are you all applying?- schools?

Emiliano Zurita: Well I'm applying right now to Syracuse, Corporate Union, USC, Pratt, Parsons and Northeastern and I'm waiting to hear from them in April.

Mayor Cason: April 15th.

Commissioner Anderson: That's a great selection, great selection. Have you all applied too?

Sasha Kayal: [Inaudible – off mic]...

Commissioner Anderson: Good.

Shiori Sageshima: I'm waiting also, but I applied to Syracuse, USC, all over the country.

(Laughter)

Commissioner Anderson: Well I wish you all the best of luck and its just very nice in the future of architecture and planning is in good hands. So thank you for presenting.

(Applause)

Vice Mayor Kerdyk: I'd just like to add that it's really encouraging to see that we have such great students in the City of Coral Gables and the schools in the City of Coral Gables, both public and private and Gulliver does certainly a great job educating them. I'd be remiss not to mention that the operator is here, John Kutulis, John Kutulis' family has owned for 40 plus

years. John thank you very much for coming (Applause), and then Hank Langston who has been a long time administrator at Gulliver and really a significant part in the community of Coral Gables. He has served on many, many committees and has done a great job and he has been an integral part in making the City a good place and certainly Gulliver too, thank you very much Hank (Applause) and thank you to each one of you too for coming.

Commissioner Quesada: I just want to say briefly, the substance was great, but your presentation was spectacular, you guys have all mastered public speaking at a young age, whereas as you get older you'll see how important that is to be able to communicate in a public setting. So I just want to say congratulations and congratulations to your teachers, they've taught you well.

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you all very much.

Mayor Cason: Thanks a lot, appreciate it.

[End: 9:42:45 a.m.]