



**City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
October 13, 2009**

ITEM TITLE:

Chief Judge Joel H. Brown, on behalf of the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida, Administrative Office of the Courts, requesting an amendment to Resolution No. 28447 to allow for a third court room and chambers within the existing space for the Coral Gables Branch Court House, located at 3100 Ponce de Leon Boulevard, Coral Gables, Florida.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE CITY MANAGER:

Approval.

BRIEF HISTORY:

Resolution No. 28447, passed and adopted by the City Commission on March 8, 1994, authorized the renovations of the existing building on the site to allow for ninety per cent (90%) administrative use and ten percent (10%) accessory use in the Court Administrative Building, presently known as the City of Coral Gables Branch Court. In connection with the approval of such allowable uses, the City Commission imposed certain conditions, to include: (a) that no court proceedings shall commence after 4:30pm; (b) that the courtrooms shall not be operated on weekends or holidays; (c) that no criminal felony cases shall be conducted at that location; (d) that there shall be no holding or jail cells at that location; and (e) that the two proposed courtrooms shall not increase in number or size ("Conditions").

Since 1994, due to the overwhelming utilization of the Coral Gables Branch Court by residents and businesses to resolve legal disputes, the cumulative caseloads of the judges assigned there have increased from 10,082 in 1994 to 21,706 by the end of 2008. (Caseload projections for the end of 2009 indicate that the last year's caseloads may be exceeded.) Presently, there are four judges assigned to the Coral Gables Branch Court, who share the two courtrooms, with one judge using a hearing room as her chambers. Moreover and most significantly, due to the large volume of cases and the limited courtroom space, it has become increasingly difficult to schedule trials and hearings.

The proposed interior renovations, to include the addition of one courtroom and judicial chambers ("Interior Renovations"), would significantly alleviate the scheduling problem. Conversely, if the Interior Renovations are not made, in all likelihood, one of the judges will have to be reassigned to another court facility (outside of Coral Gables) in the interest of controlling the hearing and trial dockets so as to effectuate the prompt disposition of cases.

The Interior Renovations will not increase, but merely reconfigure, the square footage of the Coral Gables Branch Court and will only increase the allowable accessory use from

10% to 16% of the facility. (See Floor Plans enclosed herewith.) No exterior renovations are contemplated.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION:

Date	Resolution/Ordinance	Comments
	N/A	

APPROVED BY:

Department Director	City Attorney (If Applicable)	City Manager

ATTACHMENT

1. Draft Resolution
2. Memoranda
3. Letter from the Honorable Judge Joel H. Brown
4. Enclosures
5. Resolution No. 28447