

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item G-1
August 23, 2016
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

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City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark

City Attorney, Craig E. Leen

City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman

Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Director, Dona Spain

Arts and Culture Specialist, Catherine Cathers

Agenda Item G-1 [4:15:38 p.m.]

A Resolution approving the artist Sibylle Pasche and the artist's concept for public artwork, in conjunction with the Giralda Avenue Streetscape Project.

Dona Spain: For the record Dona Spain, Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Director and I have with me Catherine Cathers, she's the Arts and Culture Specialist for the City. This is a resolution approving the artist Sybille Pasche, and her concept with public artwork in conjunction with the Giralda Avenue Streetscape Project. Just briefly, this started out as thirty-five artists, that they went through for Miracle Mile Streetscape and Giralda and that was called down to four artists, and the four artists presented to the Arts Advisory Panel. Three of them were eventually eliminated, but they loved Sibylle Pasche's project proposal for Giralda Avenue. She actually did this presentation to the Arts Advisory Panel and the Cultural Development Board and it was by Skype, we had a bit of issues, and so we are here on her behalf. I am going to turn it over to Catherine to go over Sibylle's PowerPoint.

Mayor Cason: Can you explain who is on the Arts Advisory Panel?

Dona Spain: You want the names?

Mayor Cason: Even without the names, but what kind of people.

Dona Spain: Well it is required by the legislation that established that, that they be experts in art. They actually recommend to the Cultural Development Board. When I started with the City twenty years ago, I don't believe they had...it was just a Cultural Development Board and they wanted a panel specifically on art and so this was created.

Mayor Cason: Are we going to get other ones for Miracle Mile?

Dona Spain: We will, we will.

Mayor Cason: How many pieces of art will be coming to us?

Dona Spain: Right now they are down to three artists that they are looking at. They had to start over, because they eliminated one. In fairness to them they did the right thing, because they weren't comfortable with it, they were concerned about time, but they wanted to make sure it was right. So they went out again, sent invitations to artists and they looked at those presentations and they are down to three and they are looking at the crosswalks in the medians.

(Inaudible)

Catherine Cathers: Three projects at the three mid-block crossings for Miracle Mile, so this particular one is just for Giralda.

Dona Spain: We will be coming back to you in the future with those.

Catherine Cathers: And just to further clarify, all of our Arts Advisory Panel board members are all working professionals, whether they are museum directors, or instructors in higher education and universities in the area, all professionals.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: In the minutes that are included here, it shows both minutes from the Cultural Development Board as well as Art in Public Places, so if you need their names, I can hand you this.

Catherine Cathers: I'm happy to give the names, would you like their names?

Mayor Cason: No I just think it's important that the people understand that it is a panel of experts, not just Fred, John, and Mary.

Catherine Cathers: Correct.

Dona Spain: That's right.

Commissioner Lago: A panel of experts who are museum directors in some of the most prominent museums in South Florida.

Catherine Cathers: Exactly

Commissioner Lago: And who also happen to be Coral Gables residents, correct?

Catherine Cathers: For the Arts Advisory Panel, they don't, however I think only one might not be a Coral Gables resident, but they are working in the Gables too.

Dona Spain: It's been increased to seven, so there are now seven members now on that board.

Catherine Cathers: Okay so ready for the presentation, thank you. Mayor and City Commissioners. So as Dona said this is the presentation that Sibylle did after her second proposal, so she initially came to the board and the panel, with an initial kind of concept sketch, and this is her follow-up that was then approved to move forward.

So we are going to start out with her, just starting a little about her inspirations and research that she did. She did visit Coral Gables and walked the Mile with us. Dona does a great impression.

Dona Spain: She was so cute. When Earl Jackson came down from Cooper Robertson, she came from Switzerland where she stays, and she walked the Mile and at some point she started jumping up and down and clapping her hands, because she was so excited about doing something for the City. She is really adorable.

Catherine Cathers: She is very enthusiastic about this project and about our community. So she was inspired and in her research was very taken with the environmental conditions of the area of South Florida and specifically Coral Gables...the lights and shades, the colors of the Florida skies, which have also been reflected on the Streetscape itself. Although this piece is for Giralda, she's already been working quite a bit on speaking with Earl, who is also very supportive of this artist and the concept. Including the earthy colors, which relates more specifically in my opinion to Giralda Avenue, and the patterns that are within the sand, patterns within the Florida ocean water, and the water that we have in our canals here, patterns with the coral stones, the diversity of the Florida underwater world and again thinking about the patterns and how they tell histories that are discovered here. So her general concepts are being used site specific for our community, adding a third dimension to the streetscape project. As you know there is Miracle Mile and Giralda itself and how her work would be integrating within those two spaces, thinking that artwork should be close to the people, where they would be able to touch them and touch our senses and souls. The artwork would be contrasting to the fast pace times right now, transmitting an everlasting and time independent values. Her research pointed out the contact between the Earth and the ocean water, the mystery of the underwater world life, the beauty of the Florida corals, and thinking about the formations and patterns of the sea organisms...kind of pulsating, vibrating, breathing quality of that. And she also considered the symbolic aspect, reminder of the ancient history and roots of Coral Gables and its transformation and there she's referencing places like the Venetian Pool and how we still have those coral rocks in our buildings and in the architecture in our community. The characteristics of the artwork that she went on to me on about having a timeless and contemporary quality, being peaceful and joyful, fresh and perky, firm, strong, earthbound, yet a little archaic, be meaningful and poetic, warm and gentle, soft and powerful and that they fit within the streetscape design, complementing the unique and sophisticated character of Giralda Avenue; the precious materiality of both the artwork and the pavement working together; the

organic shapes of the sculptures reflecting the circular motion of the pavement pattern; having a strong contrast between the cool white shining marble, which you'll see in a moment, and the colorful surroundings of the pavement pattern; and thinking that the pedestrians should be able to walk through what we will first see as the *Coral Florist*, and experience the beauty of the surfaces very closely, inviting them to enjoy their time on Giralda Avenue and interact with them. The sculptures as you see, will have a human scale, they are not monumental. They will integrate themselves gently into the space and will be a refreshingly and calm element. So this is the first image that you are seeing of her proposal, she actually has two components to it. The first being called *Coral Florist*, which is a grouping of three sculptures, that are marking the East entrance to Giralda Avenue. The second piece being called *Secrets of the Sea*, which is one solitary sculpture, marking the West entrance of Giralda Avenue. First you are going to look at the piece that is on the West end, and here we show the artist Sibylle in her studio. She's actually has already been working on doing models for this, as we said she is very enthusiastic and excited about the potential of realizing this project. Here she is with the...you see three pieces and all the pieces, and all the models that you see in this studio shot, are related in this project.

Mayor Cason: What it's made out of?

Catherine Cathers: Carrara Marble.

Dona Spain: White Carrara Marble. And I believe that Earl Jackson went to the quarry in Italy when he was there.

Catherine Cathers: He visited her studio and has seen some of these models already. So here is photograph of the actual models that she's already created. These are the pieces from the *Coral Florist*, so these are the pieces are that from the first part of the proposal on the East end of Giralda and Galiano. The top view of the models...the head on view of the models...some different angles. The close-up shot of the some of the patterns she is working with, again these are still in the early stages, but a detail of what that texture might look like.

Commissioner Keon: They look like golf balls, they are dimpled.

Mayor Cason: They do not attract Zika do they?

Catherine Cathers: They do not and that was actually one of comments (inaudible)

Dona Spain: That was one of the questions that the panel asked.

Catherine Cathers: She assured us that it will be sculptured so that the water will easily run off and they will be kind of self-cleaning.

Commissioner Lago: That was my next question...how easy are they to maintain?

Dona Spain: She has that in there, in one of the slides. She talks about pressure washing them...the marble.

Catherine Cathers: She says that nature of the material itself really lends itself to self-cleaning.

Commissioner Lago: That material for sure is not permeable, right?

Commissioner Keon: It is.

Dona Spain: No, she says that it was not.

Commissioner Lago: I understand what (inaudible) marble was.

Catherine Cathers: We can certainly follow-up with her and ask her with greater detail on that.

Dona Spain: We certainly will.

Commissioner Lago: If it not properly treated, you have a situation where mold will grow on it and it will be exposed to the elements. It will turn from that beautiful white into a yellowish color.

Dona Spain: We'll talk to her about that.

Commissioner Keon: Red wine can stain Carrara Marble.

Catherine Cathers: So this is an image, in the location as it is now, of course this area will be paved now, with the same circular patterns that will be happening on Giralda Avenue. This is a little closer view of what that may look like. This is a rendering of just a concept of what it is with the paving, on the next few slides.

Mayor Cason: Can you sit on those?

Catherine Cathers: Some of the smaller ones can be sat on. She really intends for them to be rather interactive.

Commissioner Keon: Kids will climb on them.

Catherine Cathers: She has included this as just for an idea of the scale. We don't plan on putting these in the middle of the street.

Commissioner Slesnick: How many is she talking about doing?

Catherine Cathers: Three.

Dona Spain: She is talking about three.

Commissioner Slesnick: The end of Grialda?

Dona Spain: On the East end of Giralda and little plaza there and then one off of Ponce, on the West end, for reference.

Catherine Cathers: So moving on to the West end and this would be the singular piece, that she is calling *Secrets of the Sea*, which is just one solitary, large scale piece.

Mayor Cason: That's all sculpted.

Catherine Cathers: It is all hand sculpted.

Dona Spain: It is amazing. For me it is really interesting that she would be able to do that.

Catherine Cathers: Again some different views of the model. These are actual physical models, these are not computer renderings. She just took shots of the street as it is.

Dona Spain: For the visual (inaudible...laughter)

Catherine Cathers: But showing the placement of it, being a solitary piece at the other end of the Mile. And also the idea of the two pieces framing Giralda.

Dona Spain: She was also saying that there would be no special preparations, other than possibly the very large one, you just place them.

Commissioner Keon: Oh I thought we had it in our code, about how we... (inaudible)

Dona Spain: They are marble, they are not going anywhere.

Commissioner Keon: We made them rebuild the bases and everything else.

Catherine Cathers: There will a slide with the weight that will show how all this will have to be engineered and she will have to have calculations for us.

Mayor Cason: Tell us about her international prestige.

Catherine Cathers: At the end of it, we have some information about some of the pieces and places where she has her work. This slide she is talking about the surface and patterns of the artworks, reminding again us of the corals and organisms of the underwater world, the dissected surface patterns refracting the sunlight, the play of light and shadows, splitting up the surface of the different volumes, adding to the three dimensional aspect and the sense of it being a living and breathing piece, like a coral would be. The surface pattern of the marbles would not be translated one by one, but reviewed again during the realization in the large scale, and will become even more complex in the scale models that she is having here. Another close-up of that, of the surface texture. And then here she talks about the material itself, which we said is a white marble from Carrara, Italy. The reflection of the marble itself being bright and shiny at night, and reflects the sunlight, with play of sunlight and shadows. It is a neutral color and shape; it is a crystal line texture and transparency in the material; the material itself is resilient and timeless; cool to the sense of touch; high quality material; very historic and very low maintenance and high durability. Like I said, we can get further information about that. For the *Coral Forest* grouping of three pieces, this is the estimated dimensions and weight. So the largest pieces being about nine tons, the medium 5.5 tons, the smaller pieces 1.5 tons; the solitary piece at Ponce de Leon being about 5.5 tons. The technical information, talking about the underground preparation, being worked on with our onsite City engineers, who would work with her as well, and she has also been in discussion with Earl Jackson and Cooper Robertson, about what may be needed underneath the heavier pieces, to make sure that they are not going to break our wonderful paving. However, because of the weight, they are heavy enough to stand firmly without any iron sticks or traditional methods that we might see in other large scale sculptural works. The pieces can be easily installed if needed and replaced by crane to another area. Also, there is no special lighting that she is requesting or requiring, because of the high visibility in the night and reflective quality of the material itself. Here is the information that she's provided so far on the maintenance. The polished surface will keep the surface clean, their designed so that rain water drains off completely, with required cleaning about once a year by high pressure cleaner, pressure washer, and here she has stated that no other special maintenance is required. (Inaudible)

Just giving further detailed information on the location, on the East positioned pieces; it would have a clear focus on that plaza area towards the corner. The ideal place, originally talked about possibly lot 25, but now we are sticking to the plaza area that is closer to the intersection itself, on that (inaudible) section, the West being on the other end of the Giralda streetscape. I think that we would access and have a better idea once we are further along in the streetscape. She has further renderings about the locations and the groupings. Here she shows the contrast of the marble with granite paving pattern.

Dona Spain: I think it works really well with Giralda, because Giralda is very busy, and that pattern is busy, so you have to have something neutral, so I think in that sense that this works well.

Catherine Cathers: The budget that she's presented, this is for the two different pieces: the *Coral Florist* grouping of the three pieces, would total about \$225,000.00; the solitary piece would be an add on for an additional \$50,000.00 and then the follow-up budget shows what the additional requirements are for the shipping, crating, insurance, installation costs, travel expenses, etc.; for the two works together it would \$298,500.00. If we chose to go with *Coral Florist* and not have the solitary work included, it would be \$246,500.00

Mayor Cason: This is within the budget?

Catherine Cathers: Yes

Dona Spain: Yes

Catherine Cathers: Here she is at work on other piece. So a little bit of background on her; she was born in Switzerland and right now she works in Zurich and has her own studio there. She has her Masters in Sculpture from the Academy of Fine Arts in Carrera, Italy. She teaches, I think she is continuing to teach, although she has been quite active with public artworks, she's really been focusing on her studio works, and she's been doing numerous trips to the United States as well working as quite a bit in China. She's been exhibiting in Great Britain, Taiwan, China; those are kind of the main areas. This is her recent exhibition list, and this is just a selection, so it is not everything, but you can see the range of the places around the world, where she has work exhibited, and has public artworks in place as well. And again, just a listing of the different places throughout the world where her works are in the collection. And it is a little hard to see, but she (inaudible) a piece of the marble for us to see.

Mayor Cason: So this resolution is to approve the concept, the design?

Catherine Cathers: Yes.

Mayor Cason: And the number?

Dona Spain: Yes

Mayor Cason: One versus two or both?

Dona Spain: Well, what comes to you is a recommendation from the Cultural Advisory Board and the Arts Advisory Panel for both.

Mayor Cason: And they voted unanimous?

Dona Spain: Yes

Catherine Cathers: Unanimous, yes.

Dona Spain: So it was the for the \$298,500.00

Commissioner Lago: Question, what is the remaining budget for what we have for Miracle Mile?

Dona Spain: I think that's...

Catherine Cathers: Right now it would be \$800, there is \$1.1 and this is approximately \$300.

Commissioner Lago: And the list of the artists, those artists have not been notified yet?

Catherine Cathers: The other artists are not finalized yet, they have been recommended and we are waiting to hear from them.

(Inaudible)

Mayor Cason: Any discussion, a motion?

Commissioner Keon: You know, I find that everyone that comes here, from, I mean she's living in Switzerland where it's cold half the year. Everyone that comes here sees our beaches, the blue water, and pictures of coral, and it's like that's the only thing they see in Miami.

Dona Spain: If you google her and go on her website... (Inaudible)

Commissioner Keon: You know I guess, when I look at the brochures and all of the literature that we have used to date on Giralda, it looks somebody is dancing the tango. Every time I take a look at this, I think of, what is the neighborhood in Buenos Aires, La Boca, what is the neighborhood where the tango was...?

Commissioner Lago: I haven't been.

Mayor Cason: Buenos Aires.

Commissioner Keon: The neighborhood, La Boca, I think, is that the name of it?

Commissioner Lago: Is that your tango days?

Commissioner Keon: This isn't my tango days.

Commissioner Lago: You are going to start sounding like me in reference to the pattern, careful. You don't know if you want to join my team.

Commissioner Keon: You know what it is, I see, it is a much. You know what it is, I know what the rendering looks like, what it will look like when it's done, maybe it will be more subtle, but is very busy and very active pattern and...

Dona Spain: Are you talking about the pavement pattern?

Commissioner Keon: Yes, the pavement pattern. Is the lighting also going to be in place? I mean there is a lot of stuff going on there now and I know we wanted to have art in public places involved in this, but I would prefer personally, that we leave the space alone until it is done. And then we look like okay, so how does this work, and how do live in it, and how do they use it and whatever. I don't, when I looked at it I was sort of surprised, and I'm going to put coral there? You know...I'm sure its lovely, she uses beautiful material, she's well recognized, but it strikes me as being very busy, and I don't see the art that you're proposing adds anything to it, so as a result, I sometimes think it's better to take away. Sometimes it's better for the focus be that pattern, those lights, and the activity that goes on in a space necessary, than adding an additional element to a space. It is like putting up two extra necklaces, because you have good necklaces, and you want to say that you'd look better if you took one off. That's my feeling on that. I wouldn't support only because I think we can wait. I'd rather wait to see everything in place and then add to it rather than to do it now. I guess the coral is greatly in conflict for me with what the space looks like. It reminds me more of, if you did something more Latin American, more whimsical, because that's the way the space looks to me and looks to me as how it would act, but I'm only one voice, but keep going.

Vice Mayor Quesada: You know the one thing about Giralda, my issue with it, is when you look at the pavers, it's very colorful, it's got a lot of movement and it's a lot going on, and we're going to have the overhanging lights, and I sort of like the fact that this is very simple; but then again, how much we are really paying for something that is so incredibly simple. I'm going through her other artwork here, I was looking at it, and this is basically what the kind that she does.

Commissioner Keon: (Inaudible...it's stone.

Vice Mayor Quesada: Nothing everything, but the vast majority of it seems to be in the Carrera white marble, and sort of spherical objects, circles and spheres and ovals, very similar, and some have holes and some don't...I don't know.