



City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
January 23, 2024

ITEM TITLE:

A Resolution approving the temporary public art installation “The Water Below Us” in partnership with Blue Missions, contingent upon approval of the art design through the Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Department, and funding up to \$50,000 from the Art Fund; authorizing an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2023-2024 Annual Budget to recognize the transfer of \$50,000 from the Art in Public Places reserve as revenue and appropriate such funds towards the cost of the project (unanimously recommended by the Cultural Development Board approval/denial vote: 6 to 0).

BRIEF HISTORY:

In partnership with the City of Coral Gables’ Sustainability Division and Economic Development Department, the Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Department accepted a proposal from Blue Missions to develop and install a temporary public art installation opening on World Water Day, and continuing through Earth Day into April, 2024.

About the partners:

Founded in 2010, BLUE Missions is a 501c3 nonprofit organization that is dedicated to ensuring clearwater access through international sustainable development projects and local educational outreach.

About the project:

“The Water Below Us” is a public awareness campaign using public art to draw attention toward the protection of our local water sources. Public calls to action will include invitations for people to conserve water and avoid polluting activities.

About the artwork:

Designed by local artist collective, Vaco Studios and The Sunken Blimp, the installation will feature a hanging cylinder or “well”, that illustrates the interconnection of water and all that lives. The exterior will feature an image created by artist Nicolas Vasquez related to the theme of water.

As people are drawn to the artwork, they will be invited to interact with the piece through an augmented reality (AR) experience created by Sunken Blimp that explores the journey of a drop of water through different stages of the water cycle. Through this journey, people will learn where the water in our faucets comes from and what can be done to protect it.

A ribbon cutting is scheduled for World Water Day on March 22, 2024 and the installation will continue beyond Earth Day (March 22), closing toward the end of April; additional educational programming will be coordinated through the Sustainability Division and Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Department.

On December 6, 2023, Arts Advisory Panel members discussed the project. There was no quorum; however, Panel members enthusiastically supported the concept and discussed options to heighten the impact of the artwork including having one large well with imagery on the exterior that aligns with the project and is visually engaging up close and from a distance. They further recommended strengthening the collaborative aspects between scientist and artist.

On December 19, 2023, the Cultural Development Board discussed the project and made a motion unanimously recommending the temporary public art exhibition of “The Water Below Us” in partnership with Blue Missions.

Design of the exterior continues; it is recommended that approval of the resolution be contingent upon approval of the art design through the Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Department.

Funding for the temporary public art activation and related programming is being shared by the project partners; City of Coral Gables support is being proposed through the Art in Public Places fund reserve.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Draft Resolution
2. The Water Below Us PPT
3. Artist information

FINANCIAL INFORMATION:

No.	Amount	Account No.	Source of Funds
1.	\$50,000	001-1330-573-4802	Art in Public Places, Art Fund
Total:	\$50,000		

Fiscal Impact:

Proposed funding is through the Art in Public Places reserve, which is funded through commercial development permit fees.

BUSINES IMPACT:

N/A