

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item G-8**  
**May 25, 2021**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Vince Lago**

**Vice Mayor Michael Mena**

**Commissioner Rhonda Anderson**

**Commissioner Jorge L. Fors, Jr.**

**Commissioner Kirk R. Menendez**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**

**City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**

**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**

**Public Speaker(s)**

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Agenda Item G-8 [Start: 12:57 p.m.]

Discussion regarding funding sources for maintenance of Art in Public Places  
(Sponsored by Commissioner Anderson)

Mayor Lago: Let's move onto G-8.

Commissioner Anderson: I put G-8 on because I know that there is maintenance that goes into Art in Public Places. Maintenance on some projects is a little heavier than others; regular pressure cleaning, changing bulbs, things like that, I know is paid out of our tax base. But I also think for purposes of fiscal responsibility we need to be mindful of the types of art that's being chosen, the burden on keeping it up and how those costs are going to be paid for, literally having to repaint it every year, every two years, or is it something or are we just pressure cleaning it every so often. So, I brought that up as a discussion item as we are getting into the budget season, because I think we need to choose with the maintenance in mind and the level of maintenance that is going to be

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required and the burden that its going to place on our taxpayers themselves. So that's why I brought this up. Any comments from anyone?

Mayor Lago: I agree with you. I can see the issues that we are going to potentially have with certain sculptures that we have installed in the city that have had problems since the beginning. Case in point, the flower with the misting effect that has never worked properly, and it does and then it doesn't, then it does, and it doesn't. I think we had at one point a discussion about potentially taking monies from Art in Public Places, a percentage to allow those monies to be used to maintain our existing portfolios of Art in Public Places. Madam City Attorney, do you remember that we had that conversation?

City Attorney Ramos: It's been talked about throughout the years, but the zoning code has never been changed, to my knowledge, so extraordinary maintenance, we can use Art in Public Places funds for, and that's defined as non-routine repair or restoration of public historic art, public art or historic art. Ordinary maintenance, which is routine maintenance necessary to maintain, we cannot use the funds for as it stands now. Certainly, if you change the zoning code then you could allow for that.

Vice Mayor Mena: Also, just to add color to the conversation. We've also had a lot of discussions about, on the front end, being a little bit more effective in terms of having indemnifications and things like that, built into any arrangement with an artist, because here you are sort of warranting as the artist that the piece is suitable for the climate and the location where you are putting it, and then it turns out maybe its not so much, and we should have contractually protections in place for that. We are not, I don't think its asking too much to say to somebody, okay, we are relying on your representation that this will survive this location or climate; and I know our Cultural Affairs and Arts Board and everybody that reviews it, I know that's something they consider, because we've had situations where they've come to us and advised us that they didn't think something was appropriate for a certain location for that reason, but nevertheless, I think we've talked about it on the front end being more cognizant of that, which is important and I think its fair on the back end to consider how we maintain those things as well because we have had some issues there, no doubt.

Commissioner Anderson: I concur with you that there should be indemnifications in there. There is paint on a particular piece that dull within six months and all of us have vehicles and if our paint dulled within six months, we would be very upset.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Commissioner Anderson: And I would expect that the quality of the paint job would be at a minimum the same as you would get on your vehicle, but I don't think its fair for the taxpayers to have to carry the burden of this extraordinary maintenance. To me, that's extraordinary maintenance when you are having to paint something more often than the normal life cycle should be on something or repainting something every 18 months or two years, because you are essentially reinstalling that piece again. Its like an original installation just painting it where it was. So, I think its something we need to discuss. That language would have to be crafted to come in from the Art in Public Places. I'd like to have some input on, but I also think have the folks that are choosing the art be more mindful to select something that is going to endure our environment and is going to be more cost effective for the Art in Public Places fund itself.

Vice Mayor Mena: I think we all recognize its not anything outdoors in this town, anything. I'm sure we've all had to replace patio furniture or whatever it is.

Commissioner Anderson: Yes.

Vice Mayor Mena: Its very difficult for anything outdoors in this climate to survive this climate, its hard when you are out in the extreme heat and the rain and so on and so forth, but that's the name of the game, right. If you are submitting a piece for consideration to the city to be in a public spot and that's got to factor into whatever you are doing, and so, I agree with you. Again, I hope we can try to avoid it altogether with protections on the front end, as we enter into any arrangement with the artist, but inevitably there are going to be situations where things happen and something slips through and there are some issues, we are having with it, and I think its fair for the fund to cover some of those things. Its tough because on the other hand, they are obviously taking monies away from another potential work, but its okay, we'll figure that out.

Commissioner Anderson: It might impact the materials that are chosen. If you are choosing copper or natural patina, if you are choosing galvanized or other types of metals that rust, its going to look bad much quicker.

Vice Mayor Mena: Right.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: With permission of the Chair.

Mayor Lago: Mr. ACM, it's always a privilege.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Thank you sir. Good afternoon Commissioners and Mr. Mayor, Ed Santamaria, Assistant City Manager Operations and Infrastructure. To the extent that

this is an issue that we've been facing for a number of years, there is an initiative right now underway we are doing an assessment of all of our public art pieces, with the aim of determining what kind of maintenance is required and how regularly, and that will hopefully avoid this kind of significant maintenance that we are encountering on some of our pieces. I can also say that I do believe that the material that is being installed as part of the art installation is considered by the board. I will defer now to Catherine Cathers, who is our specialist in this particular field to chime in on that.

Art & Culture Specialist Cathers: Hello Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, I'm Catherine Cathers, the Arts and Culture Specialist for the City of Coral Gables, and as the Assistant City Manager has said, we actually just finished having an assessment of 14 works in the collection. Part of that assessment did not include the pieces that are currently under a regular maintenance plan, but we do have those figures, so that we want to get the rest of our collection back into a stable state, and at that point we'll be able to have a better idea of what the regular maintenance will be. So those funds for getting everything back to a stable neutral place, those funds are being taken out of the Art Acquisition Fund and we are not asking for General Fund monies to go toward that.

Mayor Lago: Perfect.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: Any further questions?

Commissioner Anderson: For the future vision on extraordinary type of maintenance issues, like we are discussing, is there a suggestion that you have as far as the amount of money that's needed for that, that would need to come from Art in Public Places? Do you need something from us to be able to make that happen?

Art & Culture Specialist Cathers: I think that the way that its defined right now is when there are specialized services that are needed, basically above and beyond general cleaning, pressure washing, maybe waxing, that sort of thing. So, the definition comes into the specialized services that may trigger access into the Art Acquisition Fund. So, if the Commission wanted to change anything that we currently have in place right now, then we could certainly do that.

Commissioner Anderson: Just repainting something, is that now?

Art & Culture Specialist Cathers: Repainting of painted sculptural works would be above and beyond, so that would come out of the Art Acquisition Fund.

Commissioner Anderson: So that's currently coming out of the Art Acquisition Fund?

Art & Culture Specialist Cathers: Painting of sculptural works. So, we have Jean Works that will be restored, those would be stripped and repainted and that would come out of the Art Acquisition Fund.

Commissioner Anderson: Crosswalk painting?

Art & Culture Specialist Cathers: Crosswalk painting right now is being taken out of the General Fund.

Mayor Lago: Since you are bringing that up, I just want to take this moment to speak in the Sunshine. I had a meeting with the estate from the artist and I've requested through the Manager to get as much information as possible in regard to the cost associated with the yearly painting and yearly maintenance of that crosswalk. To me personally, as an art enthusiast, it doesn't make any sense since we are one of the two cities that I'm aware of that host Art Basel events in December, why are we painting this crosswalk during the summer months. Why not paint it before Art Basel, so we can showcase it in a brilliant vibrant way while we celebrate and we have all these people visiting the City of Coral Gables to celebrate Art Basel, so that's number one. I was going to bring that up in a memo, I'm just waiting on the final numbers that Chelsea was trying to get from staff; and the second point is, and this is what I had with the grandson of the artist, who I met with last week. I don't have all the numbers yet, I'm waiting for staff to provide them, but this is another effort in trying to save money. Maybe we don't do this artwork every year. I know that there is a legal contract that requires us for ten years to do the work, but I was very clear with the grandson stating that we will find ways to save money. I need to understand what the cost associated with it are, and if I can only do it every three years, I'll only do it every three years. But my understand now is that it's a pretty significant cost associated with getting this work done. I don't know what the numbers are, because Chelsea is putting it together and then I will present a memo to my colleagues, but I just wanted to chime in, not to steal your thunder, but I wanted to chime in because I'm working on that right now and I'll be sending you a memo pretty soon in regard to that.

Commissioner Anderson: Chime in any time you want.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Anderson: The idea is to get something moving forward.

Mayor Lago: By the way, I'm a big fan of the crosswalk. I think its awesome, its beautiful, spectacular, but not at those prices.

Commissioner Anderson: I think its beautiful too, but the price is what gets most people.

Mayor Lago: And I'm the art enthusiast up here, so I don't want to step on anybody's toes, but since you brought it up, I just wanted to make sure I put that on the record.

Commissioner Anderson: Listen, I grew up oil painting, so I mean, I don't dislike art.

Mayor Lago: I know. I know. But people would expect me to be the one that says hey, let's do it all. Again, we got to try to find those extra few dollars.

Assistant City Manager Santamaria: We are happy to do whatever is the will of the Commission.

Art & Culture Specialist Cathers: Thank you.

Commissioner Anderson: Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you.