

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-5
March 10, 2026
Public Safety Building, CMR
2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago
Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson
Commissioner Melissa Castro
Commissioner Ariel Fernandez
Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez
City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Arts and Culture Coordinator, Hernan Bas

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

Agenda Item F-5 [Start: 1:47 p.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission requesting a proposal for artwork at the Mobility Hub from artist Hernan Bas with an all-inclusive budget of \$1,000,000.00; further approving funding of \$5,000.00 from the Art Fund toward the proposal; and authorizing an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget to recognize the transfer of funds from the Art in Public Places Reserve and to appropriate such funds toward the cost of the project. (Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

Mayor Lago: item F-5.

City Attorney Suarez: F-5 is resolution of the City Commission requesting a proposal for artwork at the Mobility Hub from artist Hernan Bas with an all-inclusive budget of \$1,000,000.00; further approving funding of \$5,000.000 from the Art Fund toward the proposal and authorizing an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2026 Operating Budget to recognize the transfer of funds from the Art in Public Places reserve and to appropriate such funds toward the cost of the project.

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Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. I am the sponsor of this item and first and foremost thank you for being here with us both of you. I have a quick slideshow that I want to show you, if possible, I don't know if you want me to run it or you want to run the slideshow.

Arts and Cultural Coordinator Cathers: Please go ahead.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So, this is Hernan Bas. Hernan Bas is an individual who I've had the privilege of knowing for a long time, probably when he was in his early 20s. He is one of the most respected contemporary artists in the world. He's in every major museum. He is represented by probably, I think, five of the major galleries in the world that participate. He's had multiple museum shows. He's Cuban and I think he's considered possibly, I don't have to go on much of a limb, but as you can see, he's been in the Whitney Museum, he's been in the Rubels, the Moma, the Mocha. He's considered the most important artist to come out of Miami ever and he is a homegrown talent. He went to New World School of the Arts and his paintings are, you know in very high demand, very high demand. If you've been to Art Basel, you've been to Freeze, you went to the Armory, whether it's in New York or in London, his works are always sold, they're always going to major museums and major collections and a lot of his work has to do with nautical themes, Miami, the Everglades and it's beautiful work. You know flamingos are his, you know a real trademark of his work and it's just beautiful work, very pensive, very reflective and I think it's something that people will really appreciate across the board. So, what I was thinking about was using and choosing this artist to give us a brief kind of conceptual idea of what he would do in the Mobility Hub, but I'm not looking for a painting because he's not really a sculptor, he's a painter. What I'm looking for is for him to make a painting that will then be transferred on to, imagine a wall in the mobility hub inside and it would be like one of those bronze cast works that's kind of like a 3-D work coming out of the wall. You see a lot of them in Washington, you see a lot of in New York on the buildings and it could be, you know an Everglades scene, you know maybe we'll look obviously, I don't want to tell the artist what to paint, but it could be something beautiful it's reflective of the work that he does and I think that we should invest, like we were talking about before with Adler on local artists, you know artists like Adler and artists like Hernan Bas are amazing artists that are homegrown talents that as our art scene continues to grow, you know i want to see that investment made on these artists and make sure that we take the pride. For example, if you go to New York, if you go to London, if you go to Paris you'll see these works, but it's about time that we have something of this caliber here in the city. So that's my introduction. I'd love to hear from our experts and our staff and their opinion in regard to what do you think.

Arts and Culture Coordinator: Sure. So good afternoon, Catherine Cathars, Arts and Culture Coordinator for the city. So Hernan Bas, as the Mayor has said is a very prominent artist in in our community and is really experiencing a lot of national, international renown right now, so we would really be acquiring a work at an important time in the artist's life, and also giving an opportunity to do something beyond his painting, which he's very well known for. So, I think he's

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very excited about it. His galleries are very excited about the opportunity and for the city it'd be a really meaningful piece. He is an artist of interest that the Arts Advisory Panel has discussed previously for this opportunity. We know that the Mobility Hub is going to be a very significant opportunity for artwork and we want to do something really special there. So, this piece being brought forward by the Mayor is to really provide for that proposal process that we would take through the Arts Advisory Panel Cultural Board and then back to the Commission for approval.

Mayor Lago: So, he was first represented by a gallery by the name of Fred Schnitzer Gallery. Basically, Fred was his teacher at New World and then he was picked up then by galleries like Neiman Malpin, Victoria Moreau, Emmanuel Perrott and Gallery. He has galleries all over the world that represent him that all of these galleries are in major are in all the major art fairs, including Art Basel and Basel Switzerland. So, more importantly besides his work being one of the most important works in the world right now, he is the premier artist coming out of South Florida, but he's a gentleman and he is the nicest person I've probably ever met in the art world. He and his husband call South Florida home. They have a studio here also. They live for a significant portion of their life in Detroit, but they moved up there and now they're back here in South Florida. So, my hope to do a tour soon one day of the studio and hopefully I'd love to take some of my colleagues and members of the community who would like to visit this, once we get more along through the process. I think this is the perfect artist to represent the city.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes ma'am.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I think it's a great opportunity and a fantastic artist and I think our parking garages are wonderful tapestry to change from a plain facade to something that's very nice inside and representative of our city. So, I'm very much in favor of having our Arts Advisory Panel Board look at this and moving forward I'll move it and hopefully we can do something beautiful.

Mayor Lago: Do we have any public comment?

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Of course.

City Clerk Urquia: Maria Cruz.

Mrs. Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I only have one comment. I see that we're what we're paying for up to a million dollars, but I don't see anything about maintenance, and we always get caught on that. Most of the stuff that we have done other than in recent past, we've been caught on the maintenance of the item. So that's what I'm concerned about, and I hope that we can discuss today what would the maintenance be.

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City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Madam City Attorney, in an effort to again, to clarify the misleading comments that are always thrown up here, can you explain a little bit about how the breakdown of Art in Public Places and the maintenance and the fees and how it's broken down please.

City Attorney Suarez: So, Mayor, the Art in Public Places Fund can be used for extraordinary maintenance and I have to defer to staff on this, but I think that we wouldn't know the maintenance cost necessarily until the artwork is until we have a concept and we know what it is.

Mayor Lago: But we have money, we have already a delineated formula that puts money away for purchasing and maintenance of work.

City Attorney Suarez: This would be city purchased art, so it's not like when it's a developer that brings the art forward and then we include in that you know a certain portion for maintenance. Since this is going to be city commissioned we would use you know city funds for maintenance, but yet if it's extraordinary maintenance from the funder if not other.

Mayor Lago: Like we've always done

City Attorney Suarez: That's my understanding. Yes.

Mayor Lago: Okay. So again, coming up here and saying things that again, are not true or are not facts, please will you do me a favor and stand up and also qualify and sewing and sewing negativity or misinformation, it's just not appropriate. Will you clarify a little bit about maintenance and how we maintain our sculptures and what we have.

Arts and Culture Coordinator: Absolutely. So, this piece we are asking the artist also to specifically do a bronze piece, so we already have a little bit of information ahead of time knowing how bronzes are maintained we know that they require waxing every year sometimes twice a year depending on the piece that is something that we would have assessed and is something that we require as any commission that we get or acquisition, we always require a maintenance plan for the piece. So, we do have regular, as the City Attorney said, funds for general maintenance and then we would assess whether this would fall under extraordinary maintenance, but we have those two different pools of funds are dedicated for maintenance.

Mayor Lago: Yes, Mr. Manager.

City Manager Iglesias: Excuse me Mayor. We fund that every year. This year we have \$47,000 that we added to the maintenance fund for regular maintenance of art, so it's something that we fund on a regular basis.

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Mayor Lago: Yes, just like just like the artworks by Hank Willis Thomas, we continuously maintain them. So again, this is nothing new. This is already in the books and we're already moving forward with this. By the way, this will not be exposed to the elements, it will be under obviously, it will be on the first floor, so it's not going to be direct sunlight. It's going to have some sunlight, but again and it's not going to be something where you can just touch. It's going to be on a wall, it's going to be elevated, so at the end of the day it's going to be protected. So, there is already money's put away for maintenance, the Manager said it, City Attorney said it, and our team said it. Thank you very much. We have a motion a second, Mr. Clerk.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: Yes

Commissioner Lara: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes. Thank you very much.