

**From:** [Mitchell Kaplan](#)  
**To:** [Anderson, Rhonda](#); [Menendez, Kirk](#); [Mena, Michael](#); [Jorge L. Fors, Jr.](#); [Lago, Vince](#); [Ramos, Miriam](#); [Urquia, Billy](#); [Iglesias, Peter](#)  
**Subject:** BID Reauthorization  
**Date:** Monday, July 25, 2022 11:29:37 AM

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Dear Mayor, Commissioners, City Manager, City Attorney and City Clerk,

I've just learned that the Commission, meeting today, July 25, 2022, will propose **a new resolution providing an updated voting procedure to re-establishing the continuation of the BID. I'm writing this email to address concerns I have.**

I spent many years on the Board of Directors of the BID. I've been a retailer in Downtown Coral Gables since 1982 when I founded the first Books & Books on the corner Salzedo and Aragon. Today, I am a property owner and partner in the historic building that houses our anchor store. Working closely with the Business Improvement District since its inception, I can attest to the detailed work that went into developing the BID assessment process, and the petition process we have now.

This process, as I know you know, was proposed and approved by the City of Coral Gables and Miami-Dade County. Like many other property owners, my partners and I submitted our signed and notarized petition for BID renewal in 2022 and were pleased to hear that the majority of members had done the same.

I was, therefore, surprised when I learned that the Commission had overturned the finished election because of two dissenting voices. This raises some profound questions: what about the voices of the property owners who voted to re-establish the District? why should their fair votes be thrown out? why should all the organizing work of the BID to set up and to canvass votes for this year's election be thrown out?

**The BID's importance is undeniable.** I have witnessed how its efforts have helped develop Downtown Coral Gables into the vibrant, culturally diverse district that it's become. It's been a great partner to the city on city projects like *Murals on the Mile* and hosts many events and activities of all kinds, including public theater, the new *Encore!* public music performance series, the downtown *Holiday Markets*, *Illuminate* and others. The BID also acts to encourage the businesses it works with to be in line with City ordinances and initiatives when it comes to concerns about the use, care and upkeep of the Downtown district. This is particularly helpful during the Holiday Season. The positive image it sends to the media, tourists and our residents I have witnessed first-hand, and its ability to amplify all the good work of the City and its business community is essential.

**An alternative to the action today would be to certify the election that's already taken place and if changes are felt to be needed, they should be done in an orderly fashion, with feedback from the BID, property owners, residents and other stake holders. Any of the changes can then be implemented for the next reauthorization cycle.**

Thanks for the opportunity to address you. I'm hoping that you'll take this into consideration today and give proper weight to the needs of local businesses and the ninety-one members who have already voted for the re-election. **If the Comission believes there is reason to re-evaluate the existing charter regarding the regular vote for re-establishment of the BID, any changes should be applied to the next vote in five years.**

Sincerely,

Mitchell Kaplan

Owner, Books & Books

265 Aragon Avenue

Coral Gables

305-609-7867

**From:** [Carol Damian](#)  
**To:** [Lago, Vince](#); [Menendez, Kirk](#); [Mena, Michael](#); [Anderson, Rhonda](#); [Jorge L. Fors, Jr.](#); [Ramos, Miriam](#); [Urquia, Billy](#)  
**Cc:** [Aura Reinhardt](#); [Vincent Damian](#); [Carol Damian](#)  
**Subject:** BID re-election question  
**Date:** Sunday, July 24, 2022 8:51:03 PM

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Mr. City Clerk, please include this correspondence as part of the record for the item G-6 on the 7/25 commission agenda.

To Coral Gables City Officials:

I am writing this letter in support of the BID of Coral Gables and its remarkable community outreach over the past few years. I have been involved with a number of BID projects and I am a long-time Coral Gables resident and participant in numerous cultural activities, including a member of the Board of the Coral Gables Museum; member of the Cultural Affairs Board; former Director and Chief Curator of the Frost Art Museum; key patron of the Lowe Art Museum, member of the Dade County Trust for Art in Public Places, and many other community projects. Under the directorship of Ms. Aura Reinhardt, and with the interest of Mayor Lago and his appreciation of the Arts, I am most grateful to see the ongoing efforts of the City and the BID to attract important art exhibits and cultural attractions to our Downtown. In 2020, I was part of an effort organized by the BID to curate a group of artists invited to create their own studio spaces in empty storefronts to activate Miracle Mile - ART ON THE MILE. People still ask me about it and we had a very long waiting list for future projects. It was very successful and greatly appreciated by local artists and the art interests of our City. Ms. Reinhart and the BID are always looking for opportunities to enhance the cultural footprint of the Mile as a centerpiece of activity and recognize the importance of such efforts for everyone, especially for the image of the City Beautiful. I hope this letter of support serves as a reminder of the critical part the BID plays in our greater Gables community and encourages you to support the BID's renewal in the City. Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

**Carol Damian**

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Carol Damian, Ph.D.  
Art Historian  
1010 Palermo Avenue  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
305-607-5160 c

**From:** [Jillian Hornik](#)  
**To:** [Lago, Vince](#); [Mena, Michael](#); [Anderson, Rhonda](#); [Jorge L. Fors, Jr.](#); [Menendez, Kirk](#); [City Attorney](#); [City Clerk](#)  
**Subject:** Reconsider  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 26, 2022 12:20:01 PM

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July 26, 2022

Dear Mayor Lago, Commissioners, City Manager, and City Attorney,

I am writing you today to ask for your assistance. At June's commission meeting, item G-9 was discussed regarding the re-election process of the BID. One outspoken and misinformed property owner publicly presented influential information that was incorrect. The BID was told not to bring an attorney to this meeting prior, and therefore was unable to provide a sufficient rebuttal to these claims. As a result, the commission made a judgement call to cancel the election.

This is despite following the same petition procedures that have been in place since 2012, developed over 5 years by an election consultant, as approved by the city and state attorneys, and under the direction of the city clerk. This is also despite already receiving the 91 notarized petitions needed from our property owners for the organization to proceed for another 5 years. Additionally, a city representative sits on our board, and was aware of the process before it began. If there was any concern, it should have been addressed prior to the election beginning.

**The voices of our voters have been heard, and need to be counted.** Why are you listening to the complaints of 1, rather than the votes of the majority?

Due to this cancellation, the very existence of this valuable organization is in jeopardy. To further complicate this pressing issue, the agenda item on yesterday's commission meeting was delayed until the end of August. Due to BID's sunset provision, the timing of this particular election is of extreme importance. In order to prevent any disruptions to the day-to-day operations and planning of upcoming events, a supplemental election or complete re-vote would need to be completed by September 30th. This timeline would not be possible if a decision is left for the next commission meeting.

**I urge you to please certify the results of this year's previous election. It was conducted properly. Any changes to the BID's election process should be thoroughly researched for future elections, which will take time...possibly years.**

Your aid in overturning June's commission decision is greatly appreciated. The Coral Gables BID has proven to be an asset to not only the property owners and merchants, but to the community at large. Please allow this independent organization continue to conduct business as necessary, with your support.

Sincerely,

Jillian Hornik

Chair, Business Improvement District

Owner, Jae's Jewelers