

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item I-9
August 29, 2017
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Pat Keon
Commissioner Vince Lago
Commissioner Frank Quesada
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Cathy Swanson-Rivenbark
City Attorney, Craig E. Leen
City Clerk, Walter J. Foeman
Deputy City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Historic Preservation Officer, Dona Spain

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item I-9 [5:41:51p.m.]

A Resolution authorizing a public project series of artistically painted Venetian Posts for temporary display throughout the Central Business District with eventual auction to benefit a regional non-profit organization.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Next is Venetian Posts, City Manager. You have one and-a-half minutes.

Ms. Spain: This is about a program similar to the flamingoes that happened in the past and the intent is to celebrate the streetscape opening when it's done, so similar to the flamingoes we are talking 3 to 50 posts that would be throughout the business district...

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: Throughout the downtown, not just the district.

Ms. Spain: The downtown, I apologize, absolutely – painted by different artists; we would have a call for artists; they would do an application; do a design. We've identified the fabricators of the

posts; we would match sponsors to the different posts just like we did with the flamingoes and then they would be installed. There would be an auction at the end, the proceeds going to a non-profit. We've been talking to the Community Foundation, Mary Snow, and so we would like to have your authority.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do I hear a motion?

Commissioner Lago: Let me ask you a question. What is the budget in regards to this?

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: The cost of the – with sponsors they are paying for the poles. We would hire the person that coordinated the flamingo project, so that they would identify sponsors, link them with artists, organize the auction and market the event; and so we know what the cost of that is, the additional cost would be borne by the sponsors and by the supporters of the Venetian posts. I have to also give a shout-out to former Vice Mayor Kerdyk because his daughter, Lee Kerdyk, is doing some posts within the waterways and so we asked her can we join in that project and have the artist sponsoring throughout the downtown and they were very excited.

Commissioner Lago: I'm not opposed to it, but when I've gone to areas like Eighth Street and they have the chickens and then you have the manatees, I think in the Grove, we were talking about aesthetics and taste before, we need to be very, very careful, because after all the money that we spent on Giralda and all the money we spent on Miracle Mile, I mean I get it, my taste is a lot different than other people's taste. Again, when you come to my house and you look at some of the contemporary art that's on my wall, my wife cringes, but she gets over it, just shows up...

Commissioner Quesada: I mean there is a lot to cringe about (laughter).

Commissioner Lago: Are you talking about me or you are talking about my art.... (laughter) So, what I was saying was, to me we need to be, I want to be careful, I want to be careful about this project out of respect to other cities, I don't want to get into too much detail, but I think that we've put a nice pallet right now. It's very clean, we want to minimize clutter and I think that if we are not careful we could have a rainbow of art splattered everywhere on these Venetian poles and it may take away from the beautiful aesthetics.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: If I may. The vision does not have to be on Miracle Mile and Giralda; it's on all those other streets that didn't have benefit of that streetscape.

Commissioner Lago: And, when you mentioned that before kind of calmed my concerns a little bit, but I'm supportive. I just want to see – I would hope that we can get some good artists to get involved.

Commissioner Quesada: I think it's great because it's temporary. The only place that really still has it left is Ortanique with the flamingoes. So, I think it's a great fundraiser, everyone typically loves it, the Venetian poles are synonymous with the 1920's and 30's Coral Gables. We've just got to make sure we pick the right artist to...

Ms. Spain: There will be probably fiberglass I would imagine, I'm not sure, we have to talk to the fabricators and see what they have.

Commissioner Lago: They had fiberglass in the 1920's, I'm asking seriously?

Ms. Spain: No.

Commissioner Lago: Quick question. Peter is there an issue here in reference to say like hurricanes and making sure there is an issue, are we going to bolt this down to the ground?- are there metal extrusions?

Ms. Spain: I've had that conversation with Peter.

Commissioner Lago: And, you feel safe about this, how about like ADA concerns on the sidewalks and people in wheelchairs and those kinds of issues, are we going....from the County?

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We have to work out all the ADA issues, make sure...

Commissioner Lago: That better be a priority.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: Absolutely – yes.

Commissioner Lago: And, also the issue too of hurricanes, we are in the middle of hurricane season.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias:....bolt them down and have some way of removing them.

Commissioner Lago: How are you going to bolt that down to the brand new sidewalk?

Ms. Spain: We are not.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We cannot. We will have a system that...we may have to remove.

Ms. Spain: You have to think ballast.

Commissioner Lago: And, what about also insurance issues, what if somebody knocks one over and it falls on somebody.

Assistant City Manager Iglesias: We looked at the issues of hurricane protection, also stability, so if somebody climbs on top of them they don't get hurt, so we would look at all those issues and we've done that before. If it's on the Mile, for instance, not saying they are going to go on the Mile, but you can't anchor it on the Mile.

Ms. Spain: No.

Commissioner Lago: You are talking about a Venetian pole, if somebody climbs on it, it will snap. Obviously, it's made of fiberglass, you know that they can't carry that load, it's not a metal pole, it's on a piece of wood. Those are things we need to look at and see they may not be cost effective.

Ms. Spain: Absolutely.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: We didn't want to go further down the discussion if the Commission wasn't willing to allow us to do it.

Commissioner Lago: But, I'm going to make the motion.

Vice Mayor Keon: But, I'm also – you are going to have artists that are going to paint these poles and then the poles are going to be temporarily displayed around the City, right, and then you are going to have an auction to auction off these poles?

Ms. Spain: Yes. Yes.

Vice Mayor Keon: So, there will be an event around it.

Ms. Spain: Yes.

Vice Mayor Keon: How long do you expect to have them installed before you...?

Ms. Spain: That's still to be determined.

City Manager Swanson-Rivenbark: I can tell you how the flamingoes happened. So, they were either purchased a flamingo for \$2,500 or you sponsored one for \$2,000. Prices would be different, but concept applies. If you sponsored it, the \$2,000 one, all of the sponsored ones go into an auction for a charity. About three months was the install, because we didn't want it too long, then they would be less fun and less surprised; and so we would envision it to be three months or four months, if somebody purchased it, it would go to their home. If somebody sponsored it, it would go to, like when we did it before, we had it at Miracle Theater and some of those flamingoes, we didn't pick the flamingo design, but we joined with Miami Beach and will tell you the Brito sculpture, the Brito Flamingo went for \$18,000.

Commissioner Lago: That's a beautiful sculpture by the way.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: One possibility as Commissioner Mena said, we can impale pea fowl on the poles.

[Laughter]

Commissioner Lago: I made the motion, but one last comment that I want to mention here. Make sure that the artists have the color pallet that's approved by the City of Coral Gables the exterior.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Alright, it's been moved and seconded.

Commissioner Lago: Its a concern of mine, we want to follow all the rules, talking about aesthetics and also taste, because I want to make sure that my taste doesn't impinge on Commissioner Mena's taste.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: All those in favor say aye.

All: Aye.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Opposed – likewise. Unanimous.

[End: 5:50:10 p.m.]