

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item H-1 and H-2 are related
May 14, 2019
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli
Vice Mayor Vince Lago
Commissioner Jorge Fors, Jr.
Commissioner Pat Keon
Commissioner Michael Mena

City Staff

City Manager, Peter Iglesias
City Attorney, Miriam Ramos
City Clerk, Billy Urquia
Historic Preservation Officer, Dona Spain
Arts and Cultural Specialist, Catherine Cathers

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Items H-1 and H-2 are related [12:29:00 p.m.]

H-1: A Resolution authorizing combining Art in Public Places fees associated with 735 and 743 Almeria Avenue. (Unanimously recommended by the Arts Advisory Panel approval/denial vote: 4 to 0, and the Cultural Development Board approval/denial vote: 7 to 0).

H-2: A Resolution approving the concept and donation of a public artwork titled “Coral Carpet” by R & R Studios to be sited in Balboa Plaza in conjunction with 735 and 743 Almeria Avenue in fulfillment of the Art in Public Places requirement for public art in private development. (Unanimously recommended by the Arts Advisory Panel approval/denial vote: 4 to 0; and the Cultural Development Board approval/denial vote: 7 to 0).

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Let’s do on and I’d like to take H-1 and H-2 out of order. I think that we have some opponents here.

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Ms. Cathers: Hello Commissioners, my name is Catherine Cathers with the Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Department. I am the Arts and Cultural Specialist for the City and we have a presentation. We are coming to you with two related items to request for the combination of 735 and 743 Almeria Avenue, Art in Public Places needs to be combined. This is with Althea Row and Biltmore Row development projects, to combine those Art in Public Places fees and also, they are asking for a waiver from the Commission to do public art that would be commissioned and donated to the City. We do have a representative here from MG Developer, Alejandro Perez. And we do have a presentation if they can queue that up please. This is a presentation about the public art that they are proposing. This is going to be by MG Developer with the waiver request. As part of our code, they have the option to request a waiver of the fee and in lieu of that acquiring or commissioning artwork and also donating and installing artwork to the City. So, they are actually doing two points for the waiver request. This proposal that they are coming to us with today is a piece that is going to support artwork that's already been donated and commissioned, commissioned and donated to the City to go along with "Mid-Summer Night's Dream" which is located at Balboa Plaza. And a little bit of background. This is the location Balboa Plaza where "Mid-Summer Night's Dream" is currently sited. It's a sculptural sofa and part of the work that the studio does, this is R & R Studios, Roberto Behar and Rosario Marquardt. They came up with this idea and this concept of bringing the outdoors inside and indoor outdoor. So, this is continuing that theme with this particular project. This is an image of the piece that's currently sited at Balboa Plaza and just an image about this particular piece which is called "Coral Carpet" and the importance of that carpeting to the domesticity of living spaces. So conceptually "Coral Carpet" continues this slice of domesticity into the public realm. The carpet itself and together are performing an extension of home into the park and together with the Banyan tree in the background is acting as an analog of living in Coral Gables. Some more images of the artwork itself. Formerly, it gently accompanies the dimensions of the sofa, defining a virtual living room within the park and the pattern of the carpet itself is introducing a flower motive with the flowers appear to be blooming, half blooming, pulsating in various stages of blooming. The colors of the carpet are complimenting the stone that's in the sofa, and the presents of the greens in the plaza, the predominant coral color is a gentle nod to Coral Gables. The dimensions of the piece are about 26 and-a-half feet by 13 and-a-half feet. This is just another image of it in its base. And we also just want to mention that the Terrazzo – some of the examples of Terrazzo that they are working with day-to-day. They received an award in 2007 for other Terrazzo works, so they have a lot of experience with Terrazzo. We've been working with our professionals on the Arts Advisory team to discuss in great detail about how this will work on the sub-straight that's outdoors; and its going to be an inlaid Terrazzo. So, they will be doing pre-cast inlaid forms as part of the petals and the flower motive toward Terrazzo on site. The consensus is that as Terrazzo they want to age naturally and there maybe natural cracks that develop that will be part of the artwork and are acceptable.

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Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Beautiful. Do I hear a motion?

Commissioner Mena: Question. The sofa and the lamps were that a separate – or are these the same?

Ms. Cathers: Same artist.

Commissioner Mena: OK. OK. Good.

Vice Mayor Lago: I was trying to find the nexus.

Commissioner Keon: Can I make one statement? I recently had – I was at lunch with a group of women my age and older who were – they don't embrace the contemporary art that we bring to the City and I think its that not everyone understands the message of the contemporary art pieces. Because as we talked about it, and I said to them, they want more pergolas and what Merrick put in the City.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What?

Commissioner Keon: Pergolas and those kinds of things. But you know, I love that installation. I think that installation is wonderful, wonderful, and adding the carpet makes it even better, even better. But I think that modern art tends to require an explanation, especially for someone that's not really into it, or is used to looking at more figurative art. So, I wonder if the Cultural Affairs Department and the Art Advisory can work with Coral Gables TV, because most of the content on Coral Gables TV is not – could be much better than it is, but if you could do a series on art and on public art, and show these pieces and have that conversation about what the story behind that piece is, maybe our community will learn and more embrace the art as we move through the City. I think the story that goes with the flowers, I mean I know that there are still people that don't like them, but the story that goes with that gives you a real appreciation for that piece, but no one ever tells that story, but we could tell that story.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: We could look into that.

Commissioner Keon: So, we could use Coral Gables TV to begin to, the content could be far better than what is just continuously repeated...

Ms. Cathers: I think now we have enough pieces that would make a really nice series.

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Commissioner Keon: Yes. You could begin to talk about public art. It really would help us.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: If there are any problems talk about public art.

Commissioner Keon: Right. But if we would do it on our channel that's on channel 77, so when people are watching something on there, or if it's a Commission meeting and it goes into – we can have them understand that...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: That's a nice idea.

Commissioner Keon: And learn to appreciate what is the current art that you are going to see and eventually we'll move to another phase and we'll see different things. But this idea of - when I went through the explanation of it is bringing the outside in, and the inside out and how under Merrick these were gathering spaces and its just a different interpretation of a gathering space. It was, oh yes, well they didn't think about that. So, you could add so much to the public dialogue if we could do that and do a series on public art.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I would very much like to do that.

Commissioner Keon: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Do I hear a motion on this?

Commissioner Mena: I make a motion.

Vice Mayor Lago: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please. This is on both of them, right?

City Attorney Ramos: Probably on two separate motions sir.

Commissioner Mena: Make a motion on H-1.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: H-1.

Commissioner Mena: Yes

Commissioner Fors: Yes

Commissioner Keon: Yes

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Vice Mayor Lago: Yes
Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes
(Vote: 5-0)

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: H-2.

Commissioner Mena: Make a motion on H-2.

Vice Mayor Lago: Second.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Will you call the roll please.

Commissioner Fors: Yes
Commissioner Keon: Yes
Vice Mayor Lago: Yes
Commissioner Mena: Yes
Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes
(Vote: 5-0)

[End: 12:38:27 p.m.]