

**City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting**  
**Agenda Item I-1**  
**November 12, 2019**  
**City Commission Chambers**  
**405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL**

**City Commission**

**Mayor Raul Valdes-Fauli**  
**Vice Mayor Vince Lago**  
**Commissioner Pat Keon**  
**Commissioner Michael Mena**  
**Commissioner Jorge Fors**

**City Staff**

**City Manager, Peter Iglesias**  
**City Attorney, Miriam Ramos**  
**City Clerk, Billy Urquia**  
**Historic Preservation Officer, Dona Spain**

**Public Speaker(s)**

**Patrick O’Connell**  
**Venny Torre**  
**John Copeland**  
**Lance Fung**  
**Jackson “Rip” Holmes**

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Agenda Item I-1 [9:28:30 a.m.]  
Discussion on Illuminate Coral Gables.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: And now, we have a time certain item, 9:15, good. Discussion on Illuminate Coral Gables, I-1. Good morning.

Patrick O’Connell: Good morning, members of the Commission and...

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Agenda Item I-1 - Discussion on Illuminate Coral Gables.

Vice Mayor Lago: Good morning.

Mr. O'Connell: Mayor Valdes-Fauli. Nice to see you all this morning. I think many of you have heard about this bold initiative that has been undertaken by a number of members of this community and organizations. My name is Patrick O'Connell. I'm immediate past chair of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce and I'm secretary of the Board of Illuminate Coral Gables. And I'm joined by Venny Torre, who is chair of the Business Improvement District, and he is the president of the Board of Illuminate Coral Gables. We have a PowerPoint presentation. I don't know if that's teed up and ready to go or not. And it is, great. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: It is.

Mr. O'Connell: And here is the clicker. So, I'm going to run through -- we have a number of slides, but we're going to go through this rather quickly. So, Illuminate Coral Gables is going to be an annual world-class group art exhibition on par with the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tate in the London, featuring light-focused sculptures and other works that will be visible 24 hours a day, but at night, will come to life with different features provided by light and technology. We plan to install this throughout downtown Coral Gables. And this will be an indoor and outdoor experience, much of it being outdoors, obviously. This meant to bring a very large number of people to the City. This is planned for the weekend of Martin Luther King weekend, January 2021, which is the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18<sup>th</sup>, with some of the major works that will be installed to remain, hopefully, through President's Day. So, we want this to have sort of a large debut with then a lasting effect with visitors coming back again and again to see the works through that month between the two holiday weekends. We anticipate a tremendous amount of press for this event. It is really the first of its kind anywhere in the world. No other city has endeavored to do a public art exhibition focused on fine art works of light focused art. Venny, do you want to pick up and talk a little bit about our mission?

Venny Torre: Sure. First of all, I want to take one step back and ask -- there's a lot of people here that are representing the Illuminate group. So, if you're representing the group or a friend of Illuminate Coral Gables, will you please stand up to show your support for the project? So, I just wanted to show you the breadth of the work that we're doing. But, basically, the project endeavors to bring together the major groups of the City of Coral Gables as one project. This is going to be our project. This is the City's project by way of Foundation, the Chamber, the BID, museum and Economic Development Division of the City of Coral Gables by way of the City. So, this is the first time we've actually put together five groups to get -- to become one. This is going to be a world-class project. So, the project began about a year ago and has already developed into the point where we're actually collaborating and meeting on a regular basis. We've had probably already 10 to 12 board meetings. The joint effort of this group is just beginning, but this is going to continue for -- in posterity for a long time. Okay, so there's basically an endeavor to do this across all of Coral Gables eventually. We're going to start focusing in downtown. This is going to be downtown centric at first, but it will be hopefully going beyond downtown and we're going to take it throughout the City. We have some intended locations that are obvious, the Coral Gables Museum, probably the Colonnade is a good sample. The -- in front of our City hall right here, this plaza will be major, major place for us to start and end the project. And we are intending to bring thousands of people to this project. This is way beyond what we've seen with -- our intent is to take it beyond what Umbrella Sky did. This is going to be, hopefully, ten times as big and much more serious. So, to do that, what we've done is -- we need to get some seed money from you guys today or at least start talking about it. And part of the reason we're here is to let you know that our intent is to raise the funds for this. This is going to be -- that's why this is a big project made up of so many groups. We intend to do this over the course of this full year, but ideally, we would like to City to, at some point, hopefully very soon, become a partner with us fiscally. We do have some commitments already.

Mr. O'Connell: So, if you want me to pick up.

Mr. Torre: Yeah.

Mr. O'Connell: Venny. So, we've already reached out to a number of other organizations within the County. We've had meetings with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and talked about the idea of doing a districtwide light art project for students next year that would culminate at this festival. It would bring in, hopefully, thousands of schoolchildren with their works to participate as well as their families, folks that don't typically come to Coral Gables. We're also joined here this morning by John Copeland from the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau. We've had a number of meetings with them because even though this will be a Coral Gables specific show, this will be something that I think will reach across the county and will be something that will draw folks from outside of Miami-Dade County. So, John, did you want to step up quickly...

John Copeland: Sure.

Mr. O'Connell: And just say just a few quick words?

Mr. Copeland: Absolutely. Thank you so much and good morning. My name is John Copeland. I'm with the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau, and I serve as the Director of Cultural Tourism. We know in this community that tourism as a strong economic driver for everything that we do here in Coral Gables. And so, with that, we believe that this type of event will draw a number of tourists to our community, which will again help infuse our travel economy, but also, put Coral Gables on the map in an artistic way, just like these major cities and major museums that we see around the world. We know what happens during Art Week with Art Basel. We see the crowds that come to the South Beach Wine and Food Festival. We've seen the experiences of cultural travelers to Miami, and we know that Coral Gables can benefit from this as well. So, with that, the Greater Miami Convention and Visitors Bureau has committed resources. We will be supporting this event through PR, through content development, through our strong marketing initiatives to really bring Illuminate Coral Gables to the forefront of the international art world. Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Mr. O'Connell: Thank you, John. So, Venny mentioned our collaboration. And I think both Venny and I are really proud of the fact that we brought together all of these community stakeholders to work, focus on this one initiative. But I think through our meetings that we've had, we've determined that amongst all of these talented people, none of us have ever done this before. And so, really one of our first orders of business was to find a group that had experience with this and had some -- has the ability, has the vision to help bring this dream to life. So, after an extensive search -- back at the beginning of August, we put out an RFP and drew over 40 applications from around South Florida and literally around the world. And after this exhaustive search, we have selected and chosen the Fung Collaboratives, which is a bicoastal group, both from New York, as well as California, that has extensive experience, specifically with public art installations. So, with that, if I could ask Lance Fung, who is the curator for the Fung Collaboratives, to step to the podium and say a few words. Lance, if you could just step right up here and -- thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Good morning.

Lance Fung: Good morning. Thank you, Mayor and City Commissioners. I'll take the clicker. Thank you. So, first of all, it is a huge pleasure to be here in Coral Gables. We never thought we'd be working here and now we are consumed with Coral Gables. And everyone that we're speaking to the project about Illuminate Coral Gables in New York, San Francisco and around the world is already riveted with the concept. I'm not going to take too much of your time. So much of the heavy lifting has been done by these two gentlemen as well as the Board of Illuminate Coral Gables. I just wanted to show you a few projects. This is our most recent project in Philadelphia. Philadelphia, after a global search, selected Fung Collaboratives to create the centennial for Benjamin Franklin Parkway. And rather than doing a concert or fireworks, they wanted to initiate or commemorate their major accomplishment through an art project. So, we created this temporary public art project with one of the most famous artists around the world. His name is Cai Guo-

Qiang. He also did the centennial -- or the 50-year anniversary for a Central Park. And ultimately, this is an image to show you how user-friendly art can be. I think when people think about contemporary art, they're a little nervous that oh, it's just for a certain kind of class or a certain kind of education group. But in reality, great art speaks to everybody. So, I think everyone here has been touched by an artwork when they went on a school trip to now, hopefully. And that's what we want to bring to town. Yes, it will be world class. We'll have world-famous artists, but also equally important will be the ability to discover, mentor and find artists in Coral Gables and also to inspire and encourage children to be a part of this very important scene if not, vocation or market. In the case of Cai's piece, we transformed 27 pedicabs through 1000 handmade lanterns and they became an interactive piece that went up and down the Mile along Benjamin Franklin Parkway. So, in reality, what we want to do is, as Patrick intimated, work with the Board of Education to identify a local artist who will then do a project that will reach every school and homeschooled child as an option if they want to participate in the project. We're working with the local galleries and local museums to find artists from the region. Something that's really remarkable about Coral Gables, which I think may be a little new to other parts of the country, especially in the art world, is that there is raw talent here. And it also is very Latin based. Coming from San Francisco, part of the year is very Asian based. And then, in New York, it's kind of this microcosm. So, what we're hoping to do is really illustrate the global impact, the voice, the quality, and the types of work that we can create that are visible in the day and also visible at night. In one way, the main, I think, objective for us is to create and provide an experience, one that has a legacy and a memory, one that proliferates social media, but ultimately, it will hopefully build an audience and make people want to come back to Coral Gables year after year. The other idea too is really we want the first and foremost audience are people from Coral Gables. So, we want them to discover their City and rediscover the City through the eyes of visionary, young and very established artists and how they interpret your City and what community actually means. So, thank you very much.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Mr. O'Connell: Thank you, Lance. So, in closing, I would say that what we're seeking from you all this morning is your overall support of this project. And we didn't mention that the community organizations that began this project, the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Improvement District, the Community Foundation, and -- as well as the City, all provided small checks of seed money earlier in the year which have gotten us to this point. You've given us enough, but it's not enough. We need now to engage more organizations to help us, notably, a PR firm to start spreading this message around the world. And so, that is our ask of you that we receive seed money from the City of Coral Gables to continue this very important initiative. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Mr. Torre: I'd like to close with...

Commissioner Keon: When and how much?

Mr. Torre: Final statement.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Go ahead. Wait, wait. Go ahead.

Mr. Torre: No, the final statement -- so, you know, Miami is known for Art Miami, and Miami Beach, I guess, is known for the food and wine festival. We are intending to put something on the map for Coral Gables, specifically, for Coral Gables. This is what this is going to be. This is going to be like a similar type...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

Mr. Torre: Of project.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: What are you seeking?

Mr. Torre: Well, we have asked the City Manager for a specific amount. I'm not sure if that's doable, but again, this is not to fund the entire project. This is to get us going.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: (INAUDIBLE).

Mr. Torre: The ask was a hundred thousand dollars to be matched.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Mr. City Manager, any comments?

Commissioner Keon: When?

City Manager Iglesias: Mr. Mayor, I think we have a certain fund that I believe that we can appropriate \$100,000 from...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: If the Commission sees that this project is a viable project. It has many, many positives and it's -- all our agencies, the BID, the Chamber, and the museum and so forth are all involved. So, we have \$300,000 for Giralda and the Mile, in which we can use \$100,000...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.

City Manager Iglesias: Of that fund for that.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you.



City Attorney Ramos: If the Commission is so inclined, sir, we would bring back a resolution at the next meeting that speaks to the appropriation of funds because that was not on this meeting.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Okay.

Vice Mayor Lago: But what I would like to do...

Commissioner Keon: When do they need -- can we ask, through the Mayor?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yeah, please, yeah.

Commissioner Keon: When do they need it by?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: When do you...

Commissioner Keon: When do you need that money?

Mr. Torre: (INAUDIBLE) already on staff...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yesterday.

Mr. Torre: With us. As soon as possible. If you...

Vice Mayor Lago: So...

Mr. Torre: Ask me that question, the answer is as soon as possible.

Vice Mayor Lago: Mayor, if I may, I'd like to hear from Dona Spain in regards to this issue, if possible.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: What funding source are you referring to, Peter? Is that money that's already set aside for Giralda?

City Manager Iglesias: That is correct.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Is that the Art Acquisition Fund...

City Manager Iglesias: No, it's...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Money?

City Manager Iglesias: Not Art Acquisition Fund.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Okay, then.

Commissioner Keon: What is the fund?

Vice Mayor Lago: Because that was...

City Manager Iglesias: That's another source. The Art Acquisition Fund is another source that we have not approached yet. If this qualifies, then maybe we could use some of that. However, we do have funds...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: And we can still do a major project on Giralda.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you very much, gentlemen.

Commissioner Keon: Wait, and what fund is that?

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: Well, you know, if -- I didn't realize there was another fund available...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We have funds for Giralda and...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: I think that's fine. We can have that discussion...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: We'll take \$100,000.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: And come back.

Commissioner Mena: I'm sorry. Could you say that again? I couldn't hear you.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: We do have funds...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: I just said it.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: In the Art Acquisition Fund, but if there is money in the Giralda fund, we can have -- staff can have that discussion and then come back to you at the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Keon: Please identify the source of the funds in your resolution.

City Manager Iglesias: There's two possible avenues and it's something that we need to discuss.

Commissioner Keon: Okay.

City Manager Iglesias: But the bottom line is that the funds are -- can be made available.

Vice Mayor Lago: I -- just very quickly before we move on to the next item. I think that this is a wonderful project and I support this 110 percent. I think it's spectacular, and I think it's going to highlight what a beautiful City we have and our historic past. But I want to make sure...

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: It's a fabulous project.

Vice Mayor Lago: But I want to make sure that we don't take away -- and I think Mr. Fung would agree that we don't take away monies from Art in Public Places, where we're going to potentially...

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: He said we're not. He said we're not.

Vice Mayor Lago: I understand that.

Commissioner Keon: Identify the source.

Vice Mayor Lago: I just want to put that on the record.

Historic Preservation Officer Spain: That's much better. If he has the funding, it's much better.

Vice Mayor Lago: If we have the funds available, perfect. Let's support. We get -- you know, we get both of these projects done.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you...

Vice Mayor Lago: So, that's great.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Very much, gentlemen. Thank you.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.

Commissioner Keon: Can...

Commissioner Mena: Thank you.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: There you go.

Commissioner Keon: Can we ask when they bring back the resolution that you do identify the source?

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Yes, they will. Yeah. Thank you. Okay, next item is time certain, A-10. For which item? Mr. Holmes wanted to speak on the item that just finished. Yes, Mr. Holmes. Please be brief.

Jackson "Rip" Holmes: Thank you very much for squeezing me in. I appreciate it. As you all may recall, I've been arguing -- advocating, excuse me, for misting machines. And if there's money to be had, I'd like to remind you that, for \$30,000, we can get misting machines on Giralda and Miracle Mile, which I think actually has a financial importance. They're used at Disney World. They're used on South Beach. And it gets so overwhelmingly hot here in the summer that -- I know because I have a business there. We lose money because people are so hot. They want to faint or they're sweating. So, I would urge you to please focus on the misting machines. One-third the price of what you're talking about now, but I think it has three times the financial impact.

Mayor Valdes-Fauli: Thank you, Mr. Holmes.

Vice Mayor Lago: Thank you.