

**MINUTES OF THE  
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL  
February 25, 2015**

A meeting of the Miami-Dade County Cultural Affairs Council was held at the Sonesta Bayfront Hotel Coconut Grove  
2889 McFarlane Road, Miami, FL 33133.

**Members Present**

Adolfo Henriques, Chairman  
Alejandro Aguirre  
Mireille Chancy-Gonzalez  
Xavier Cortada  
Denise Gerson  
Susana Ibarguen  
Robert Jensen  
Jorge Luis Lopez  
Phyllis Simpkins  
Monty Trainer

**Staff**

Michael Spring, Director  
Carolina Alfonso  
Kelly Allocco  
Patricia Arbelaez  
Roxana Barba  
Christina Beauvoir  
Nikenna Benjamin  
Jessica Berthin  
Sue Camp  
Lisa D'Andrea-Thompson  
Marshall Davis  
Roseline Duberceau-Baptiste  
Alex Fernandez  
Joyce Fleming  
Eric Fliss  
Sandra Hill  
Gerry Landreth  
Regla Lee

**Members Not Present**

Louis-Albert Jolivet  
Janá Sigars-Malina  
Rosa Sugrañes  
Jorge Pérez

**Others**

Mario Santana, Senior Budget Analyst, Miami-Dade County  
Laura Bruney, President and CEO, Arts & Business Council  
Betsy Mullins, Artist Services Director, Arts 4 Learning  
Mitch Bierman, Partner, Weiss Serota Helfman Pastoriza  
Cole & Bonsike

**Staff (continued)**

Marialaura Leslie  
Deborah Margol  
Gilda Mooney  
Vanessa Moriera  
Alex Peraza  
Celso Pereyra  
Adriana Perez  
Dana Pezoldt  
Brandi Reddick  
Gisella Rivera-Diaz  
Isis Roberts  
Javier Siut  
Sixto Tamarit  
Ashlee Thomas  
Nicolle Ugarriza  
Pam Valles  
Daphne Webb

Chairman Adolfo Henriques called the meeting to order at 11.28 am. Absent a quorum, he recommended that the meeting proceed according to the agenda beginning with Budget and Planning Retreat Reports: Discussion and Action Items.

## **BUDGET AND PLANNING RETREAT REPORTS: DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS**

Mr. Spring reported that the budget was submitted to Office of Management and Budget on February 23, 2015. He then directed the Council's attention to his presentation reviewing the Department's Business Plan which is broken into three strategic categories.

The first category focuses on developing organizations and artists through grants and technical assistance. He noted that the grant process allows for an inside look at the operating procedures of organizations. Staff is able to determine the challenges of an organizations as well as the overall fiscal health. This helps the Department address their needs in a collaborative and proactive manner.

The second category focuses facilities, building and improving them to insure quality spaces for performances and exhibitions. The strategy is not only to have major cultural facilities such as the Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, The Jorge Pérez Art Museum and the Patricia and Phillip Frost Museum of Science in an urban core, but to also have a network of neighborhood facilities that address the needs of the local communities.

The third strategy addresses education and outreach with the goal of increasing access and participation in the arts. Working with partners such as The Children's Trust, Arts for Learning and Miami-Dade Public Schools, the department is able to provide quality arts experiences to students throughout the County. Department sponsored programs such as Culture Shock Miami, programs at the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center and the Golden Ticket Arts Guide for Seniors help cultivate the audiences of the future as well as providing access to arts experiences for seniors.

Mr. Cortada commented that utilizing the libraries could help individual artists increase their visibility and provide more arts services to all parts of the community through gallery exhibitions and programs at the library. He also expressed the need for a program for artists that would help lend and sell their works.

Mr. Spring noted that Ms. Reddick is working with libraries on these types of initiatives. He also noted the collaborative work being done by Ms. Andersen and Ms. Pezoldt with the Parks Department through Youth Arts in the Parks.

Mr. Trainer joined the meeting at 11:48 am at which point Mr. Henriques moved to Items for Approval.

## **ITEMS FOR APPROVAL**

### **Requests for Excused Absences for January 21, 2015**

Requests for excused absences submitted by Louis Albert Jolivert, Jana Sigars-Molina, Jorge Pérez and Rosa Sugrañes were approved unanimously. (motion by Mr. Aguirre; seconded by Mr. Cortada)

### **Approval of the January 21, 2015 Minutes**

Mr. Cortada asked that the section of his remarks in Councilor Reports referring to artists performing in Cuba be revised to more accurately reflect his comments. He noted that his observations were intended to underscore the point that artists are free to participate in activities in Cuba but should do so in recognition of that government's repressive policies in regard to freedom of expression and its imposition of limits on artists' creative activities. The minutes of the January 21, 2015 Council meeting were approved unanimously as amended. (motion by Mr. Jensen; seconded by Ms. Simpkins)

## **BUDGET AND PLANNING RETREAT REPORTS: DISCUSSION AND ACTION ITEMS (continued)**

### **Coconut Grove Playhouse**

Mr. Spring provided an update on the status of the Coconut Grove Playhouse. He noted that the state required a detailed business plan for the Playhouse before a lease would be granted. The business plan fully described the partnership with GableStage and Florida International University (FIU) and was included in the lease that was approved by the state, the Board of County Commissioners and FIU.

Among the details of the proposed agreement between the County and GableStage is the provision of a 25 year term with the possibility of three renewals of 25 years each. The County can terminate the agreement at any time for convenience before the building is open.

There will be no operational assistance from the County. However, once the costs of developing and operating parking are covered, any additional parking proceeds are dedicated to helping support GableStage.

Mr. Spring asked that a motion be made to endorse the proposed agreement between the County and GableStage. The item passed unanimously (motion by Mr. Jensen; seconded by Mr. Trainer).

Mr. Henriques confirmed that the agreement had been reviewed and approved by the County attorneys.

Mr. Trainer inquired as to whether or not the proposed alternative of a larger theater on the site could jeopardize the County's plan. Mr. Spring noted that while every effort is being made to advance the plan approved in the lease with the state, there is a concern regarding possible delays and complications arising from the other proposals.

Mr. Cortada asked about contingency plans in regard to the theater's operator. Mr. Spring noted that there is a termination clause in the agreement that covers both performance of operation and the fiscal viability of the operator.

Mr. Cortada also inquired about the role of FIU. Mr. Spring noted that the agreements establish the basis for collaboration between FIU and GableStage ranging from FIU's use of the space to opportunities for students, faculty and the university community to partner with GableStage on educational and outreach programs.

Mr. Spring returned to the presentation.

### **5 – 10 Year Departmental Outlook**

Mr. Spring proceeded with a PowerPoint presentation that outlined the long-term goals for the department's programs and services and emphasized the need for more data to help guide this vision. He focused on the financial resources necessary to adequately capitalize existing grants programs and develop new programs essential to address growing cultural needs.

In addition, he pointed out that facilities, which are laboratories and generators of the artistic work, need to be improved and new ones need to be built to address the unmet needs of the organizations and communities. In the immediate future, the Department will be managing two new facilities, the 7th Avenue Transit Village Theatre and the West Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center in Tropical Park which will require operational subsidies.

He outlined the Department's goals for strengthening and increasing programs that address greater access and participation in the arts. Mr. Spring concluded the overview with a number of proposed new initiatives that would broaden the Department's array of programs and services. As an example, he mentioned that the staff of Art in Public Places is exploring partnerships with private developers to place public art in private spaces.

Mr. Spring reported that the Department will be conducting research to gauge audience interest in current and new areas of work. A grant from the Knight Foundation has been made to the Arts & Business Council for this data project. The results will be used to help shape the Department's work and to make the case for the resources needed for these important investments.

Mr. Henriques noted that a strategic approach is needed to move forward and a clear identification of the needs should be in place. He suggested that one model that might provide insight is that of the Miami-Dade Public School System with its recent success in securing resources in response to a detailed account of school improvements that were needed.

Councilors commented on the stereotypical impressions that the public may have to the terms "art" and "culture" and suggested that research utilize a more detailed account of the actual kinds of "things to do."

Mr. Lopez emphasized that research is an ongoing process that not only gathers data but tests the messaging.

### **FY 2015-2016 Proposed Budget - Overview and Issues**

Ms. Margol directed the Council's attention to their packet for a breakdown of the 2015-2016 budget. She reported that, under the current proposed scenario, which requires the Department to assume "status quo" revenues for the coming year, and assuming flat levels of investment in programs and services, a \$3 million shortfall in the Department's budget would result, which includes a reduction of \$1.8 million in grants.

She reported that the FY 2014-2015 revenue reductions, including a \$750,000 cut in General Fund revenues for grants, were able to be partially offset by Tourist Development Tax carryover revenues. Neither a restoration of the diminished General Fund revenues nor the continued availability of additional Tourist Tax carryover revenues are forecast for the proposed budget.

Ms. Margol reported that among the pressures impacting the proposed budget are required increased "internal" fees, and the instruction to include and budget for merit increases and fringe benefit restorations for personnel. She reported that it would take \$3 million to address the merit increases, staffing needs and general operating costs, as directed.

Mr. Henriques noted that the budget for 2006-2007 provided \$15.5 million dollars for grants. The FY 2014-2015 budget provides \$11.5 million. He asked Ms. Margol how much additional revenue would need to be appropriated to bring the budget for grants to the 2006-2007 level and to restore all other Department programs to their necessary operating levels. She estimated that approximately \$6 million in enhanced revenues would be needed.

Mr. Cortada observed the positive impact of the arts on the quality of life in the community as well as the economy. He expressed frustration at the possibility of the continuation of and/or further cuts.

### **Council Motion Regarding the FY 2015-2016 Budget**

After discussion regarding the best approach to request the additional funds, a motion was made to request \$10 million in order to cover the necessary resources for grants programs and facilities' operations. The motion passed unanimously (motion by Mr. Cortada; second by Mr. Lopez)

## **REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

## Florida Department of State Division of Cultural Affairs

Mr. Spring reported that the request from the Florida Cultural Alliance to the state legislature is \$49 million. This amount would fully fund all of the grant recommendations made through the Division of Cultural Affairs' competitive grants process. If fully funded, it would cover 100 applications from Miami-Dade County totaling \$8 million.

He reminded Councilors that March 18 is Arts and Culture Day in Tallahassee and encouraged them to attend if possible.

He encouraged Council members to join the Florida Cultural Alliance.

## National Endowment for the Arts

Mr. Spring reported that the President's budget proposed a modest increase of \$2 million for the National Endowment for the Arts.

## UPDATED COUCILOR ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2015-2016

Ms. Margol directed the Council's attention to the proposed Councilor's assignments. Councilors will either serve as panel chair or as a panelist. She noted that should anyone express interest in particular areas, adjustments can easily be made.

## DIRECTOR'S REPORTS

- The 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue Transit Village Theater will require a budget of \$600,000, at a minimum, to open. Mr. Spring noted that this cost is not factored into the proposed FY 2014-2015 budget. As an alternative, he mentioned that staff would pursue the strategy of identifying an operator for the theater.
- The Mayor's State of the County Address will be February 26 at The Wertheim Auditorium on the campus of FIU.
- The Department has submitted five Knight Arts Challenge proposals to the Knight Foundation.
- The Department continues its Culture Talk series which are informal gatherings of grantees to get feedback about their challenges and key issues facing the cultural community. The talks have been catalysts for development of new programs and initiatives to address needs and concerns.

## COUNCILOR REPORTS

- Mr. Cortada reported he will be participating in an exhibition sponsored by the National Weather Center in Norman, Oklahoma, the Fred Jones Jr. Museum of Art at the University of Oklahoma and the Norman Arts Council. He also reported that he is participating in *The Rising Waters Confab on Captiva Island*, which aims to spark new thinking and influence civic will toward finding and spreading solutions to the rising waters of climate change.
- Mr. Trainer reported that the Coconut Grove Arts Festival was very successful. He thanked South Miami-Dade Cultural Arts Center and Culture Shock Miami for their participation. He reminded Councilors about Miami-Dade Days in Tallahassee and asked staff for a fact sheet that could be included in the bags being given to participants.
- Mr. Henriques congratulated Mr. Trainer on the success of the festival. He also noted that his daughter performed in Florida Grand Opera's production of *Così fan tutti*.

- Mr. Jensen reported that the citizens of Homestead passed a bond issue for \$26 million to build a new Homestead police headquarters and complete the restoration of the historic Seminole Theatre to its former glory.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:02 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Gerry Landreth