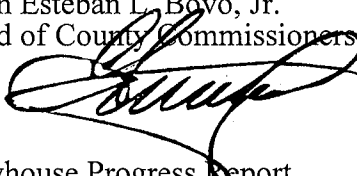


Memorandum



Date: December 1, 2017

To: Honorable Chairman Esteban L. Boyo, Jr.
and Members, Board of County Commissioners

From: Carlos A. Gimenez
Mayor 

Subject: Coconut Grove Playhouse Progress Report

On November 30, 2017 a town hall meeting was organized by Commissioner Xavier Suarez, City of Miami Commissioner Ken Russell, and Lieutenant Governor Carlos Lopez-Cantera at City of Miami City Hall to discuss the Coconut Grove Playhouse. I was afforded the opportunity to make remarks regarding the work on the Playhouse that has been authorized by the Board of County Commissioners (Board), Florida International University (FIU) Board of Trustees, and the State of Florida Cabinet and Governor. Based on the comments from the public, there was a considerable misinformation about the project.

This report is being provided to provide the facts and an update on the significant progress being made on the Coconut Grove Playhouse project, as called for in the approved lease for this important property, issued by the State of Florida jointly to Miami-Dade County (County) and FIU. We are proceeding with the architectural and engineering work that the Board authorized by Resolution No. R-294-15. To ensure that you have factual information on this work and the latest information on the current issues this report provides an overview of the following:

- A recap of the County-approved agreements called for in our lease with State and approved by the Board that define this project;
- A summary of the substantial progress made to date on the Playhouse's design work;
- The pending historic preservation issues regarding the project;
- The information disseminated as updates to the public and town meetings convened by the County to report on progress at key moments of the design;
- A summary of the roles of our project-related key partners – FIU, GableStage, the Miami Parking Authority and the State of Florida; and
- An outline of next steps to accomplish this project.

It is essential to point out that while this report updates you on our substantial progress on bringing great theater back to Coconut Grove, there is concern about misinformation that is being circulated and even more seriously, it is important to advise you that there are significant municipal and state hurdles outside of our direct control that may affect the timetable for delivering the project. These difficulties are delineated in the updates below. Given these issues and the complexity of the project, a consequence of resolving these issues is potential delays in implementing the project. **It should be noted that our lease with the State requires the project to be completed by the end of 2022.**

We remain committed to implementing the direction for the project authorized by the Board and determined to accomplish this plan for a Playhouse that will serve our community for generations to come.

A Recap of Board-Authorized Agreements for the Coconut Grove Playhouse

The following Board-approved agreements form the framework for the work well underway on the Coconut Grove Playhouse project:

- *The Lease with the State of Florida: R-621-13 (July 16, 2013) and R-797-13 (October 1, 2013)*
The lease was approved by the Board, FIU's Board of Trustees, and the Florida Cabinet and Governor. FIU and the County are co-lessees with the State of Florida. Highlights of the lease include:
 - An initial term of 50 years and two 25-year renewals;
 - The use of the approved \$20 million of County bond funds for the Playhouse with completion of the capital project by 2022;
 - The designation of GableStage as the selected operator of the 300-seat theater at the Playhouse site, given its track-record as an outstanding artistic organization and its competency;
 - The option of pursuing additional compatible development on the property (e.g., a parking garage with residential units lining the facades and the restored ground-level retail in the historic front building) with the objective of generating additional revenues principally dedicated to ensure the viability and success of GableStage's and FIU's cultural and educational programming at the Playhouse; and
 - Background on Miami-Dade County's Department of Cultural Affairs' successful track record for working with non-profit cultural organizations to manage the County's cultural facilities.

- *The Management and Operating Agreement with the Miami Parking Authority – R-1043-13 (December 17, 2013)*
The Management and Operating Agreement between the County and the Miami Parking Authority (MPA) was an essential part of resolving the property's title encumbrances attributable to code violations issued by the City of Miami. Most importantly, the agreement established a partnership between the County and MPA to operate the Playhouse's surface parking lot and to work together on the future development plan that would include a parking garage.

- *The Architectural and Engineering Team – R-294-15 (April 21, 2015)*
As a result of a competitive selection process, an expert team led by Arquitectonica International Corporation was selected and the Board approved a Professional Services Agreement (PSA) for architectural and engineering services. The design team is led by Arquitectonica and includes noted historic preservation architect Jorge Hernandez and an entire complement of building, historic preservation, theater, acoustical and cost specialists. The PSA authorized this team to determine the most thoughtful ways to address the historic nature of the property, develop a state-of-the art 300-seat theater, and incorporate a parking garage and pedestrian-friendly features for the site.

- *The Operating and Management Agreement with GableStage – R-293-15 (April 21, 2015)*
Pursuant to the requirements of the County-FIU lease with the State, the Board authorized an Operating and Management Agreement with GableStage for the 300-seat theater being developed for the Playhouse project. Highlights of this agreement include:
 - An initial term of 25 years and three 25-year renewals;
 - GableStage's responsibility for managing, programming and maintaining the theater without a County subsidy and with the benefit of net revenues that may be generated by the non-theater components of the project (e.g., the parking garage); and
 - Certain annual reporting requirements for GableStage once the theater is open.

Substantial Progress Made on the Playhouse's Design Work

The project's design team has just completed the third stage of the design work - design development - and is preparing to move into the final stage of design: construction documents. Earlier this month, the design development drawings were submitted to the City of Miami Building and Zoning Department to begin the required review process. In addition, at the end of every design stage, the project's cost estimator works on an updated capital cost estimate based on the more detailed architectural and engineering drawings; this design development stage cost estimate is scheduled to be produced by January 2018. We are committed to ensuring that the project remains on budget.

The design of the project is guided by three main objectives:

- Address the historic aspects of the 1927 Kiehnel and Elliott design thoughtfully and respectfully;
- Develop a 300-seat state-of-the-art theater to be operated and programmed by GableStage as our community's regional theater, cultivating the careers and work of Miami actors and theater professionals; and
- Remain on budget.

The masterplan developed by the design team followed the recommendations of historic preservation architect Jorge Hernandez who applied the standards of National Register Bulletins to the documented circumstances affecting the original Kiehnel and Elliott architecture. The following summarizes these recommendations:

- Based on the remaining architectural elements and available documentation, restore the entire front historic building to the original 1927 Kiehnel and Elliott design and re-introduce the original uses of these spaces conducive to an active pedestrian environment (e.g., ground floor cafes and retail, office and residential uses for the upper levels);
- Re-establish the footprint of the original crescent-shaped lobby as a tropical courtyard, where the memory, history and interpretation of this site can be displayed and is open and accessible to the public;
- Survey, document and incorporate the remaining, historic architectural elements (e.g., the proscenium arch, Solomonic columns and other extant features from the Kiehnel and Elliott design) into the design of a new state-of-the-art, 300-seat theater, and maintain the axis of the original theater and its corner entrance sequence through the historic front building; and
- Develop a parking garage with a liner of residential units on the facades that presents a "friendly face" to Main Highway and the residential neighborhood to the north and serves theater audience members, the surrounding Coconut Grove business district, and the nearby schools in the area.

The final construction documents stage of design will produce a bid package that will be used to competitively select a construction company. Assuming that the City of Miami regulatory review process remains on track, and subject to resolving the obstacles identified below, the selection process for a construction company is scheduled to occur next year.

This link provides access to the latest architectural and engineering drawings for the project:
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B5QwEdZSVgAvS1F3UFZodDVpLW8/view>.

Pending Historic Preservation Issues

In order to establish a collaborative relationship with the City of Miami regarding their role in reviewing the project for its historic preservation compliance, the County, at the City's suggestion, submitted the master plan for the Playhouse to the City's Historic and Environmental Preservation Board (HEPB) earlier this year. The masterplan, described in the preceding section above, is a conceptual plan identifying the general layout of the project components and siting of the structures on the property. This formal submission was preceded by an informational presentation to the HEPB on February 7, 2017 and individual site tours of the interior of the Playhouse were coordinated for interested HEPB members in February and March of this year. On April 4, 2017, the HEPB voted 4 to 1 to approve the County's masterplan with a number of conditions, including the requirement that the County would resubmit the project for a final Certificate of Appropriateness when it had more detailed architectural and engineering drawings.

Subsequently, two citizens filed an appeal of the HEPB's approval. The appeal hearing, which must be heard by the City of Miami Commission, has been postponed several times and currently is scheduled for December 14, 2017 at 2:00 pm. The Appeal and the County's written response to the appeal are attached as Exhibit A.

In addition, there are two other items to note in regard to historic preservation issues:

- The County is working cooperatively with the State of Florida Division of Historical Resources on the submission of a nomination of the Coconut Grove Playhouse to the National Register of Historic Places. Once there is consensus regarding the approach and content of the nomination, the process calls for both the Board and the City Commission to endorse the application and for the State to submit it for National Register consideration.
- This year, the County submitted a grant application for \$500,000 to the State of Florida Division of Historical Resources for capital work to help stabilize and restore the historic front building. The Division deemed the application ineligible and we strongly disagree with this view. The Division's notification and our response are attached as Exhibit B. While these grant funds would have been helpful to advance this historic preservation work, the project can proceed on the basis of the funding plan in place.

Public Information and Town Meetings

The Department of Cultural Affairs has issued periodic informational updates on the Playhouse project by e-mail and through social media, and continues to post these updates along with studies, reports and architectural drawings on its website: <http://miamidadearts.org/coconut-grove-playhouse-updates>. The Department has also convened two town meetings, on December 8, 2016 and October 18, 2017, to mark the end of key design phases and to provide stakeholders and the general public with an opportunity to review and comment on the latest work. Each session attracted more than 200 participants and generally, provided constructive comments on the progress being shared.

In light of the amount of misinformation that appears to be circulating about the Coconut Grove Playhouse, the Department of Cultural Affairs issued and posted Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on its website. This document will continue to be updated, as necessary. The FAQs are attached as Exhibit C.

Key Partners: FIU, GableStage, the Miami Parking Authority and the State of Florida

The following provides highlights of recent activities of the County's partners for the Coconut Grove Playhouse project:

- *FIU*
FIU continues to participate in design team meetings on the architectural and engineering work. Its theater department already is working closely with GableStage on developing joint initiatives. This season, GableStage is collaborating with FIU on a production of Shakespeare's "The Tempest" that will reach thousands of high school students. Given the opportunities that will be available for students, faculty and staff in the new theater, FIU also has committed to developing South Florida's first Masters of Fine Arts in Theater degree.

- *GableStage*
GableStage is working in consultation with AMS Planning and Research, a nationally respected arts management firm, to update the operating pro forma for GableStage's operation of the Playhouse. GableStage is conducting this work carefully and thoroughly and using the recently completed design development phase architectural drawings as a basis to calculate the facility-related costs (e.g., utilities, security, maintenance, etc.). The process of forecasting increasingly more accurate budgets for the operation of the new theater is an ongoing and evolving one throughout its planning and development, taking into account a number of interconnected elements and actions:
 - continuously refining operating forecasts and assumptions based on updated architectural and engineering drawings;
 - consultative work with the organization's board and staff regarding programming, staffing and budgeting; and
 - examining and extrapolating from the expenditures and revenues of comparable facilities.

It is anticipated that the updated operating forecast will be completed by next month. This process will continue in earnest until the construction of the theater is completed and opened (projected for the 2020-2021 season), at which point actual expenditures and revenues will be tracked against the latest forecast; any adjustments necessary will be made based on monthly actuals.

In addition, GableStage has announced that it will change the company's name to "GroveStage" in anticipation of moving to the Coconut Grove Playhouse.

GableStage continues to be one of the most artistically celebrated and financially stable theater companies in Florida. It already has received outstanding critical reviews for the shows that have launched its 2017-2018 season.

You can follow GableStage at this link: www.gablestage.org

- *Miami Parking Authority*
The Miami Parking Authority (MPA) is continuing to operate the Playhouse's surface parking lot capably on behalf of the County. Revenues from the parking lot are being committed to the capital project to ensure that it is implemented successfully. In addition, the County and MPA are negotiating a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) regarding the development of the parking garage and the

other modest residential and retail elements planned for the project. Once the MOU is finalized, we will bring it to the Board for your review.

- *The State of Florida*
The County and FIU are continuing to advance the Playhouse project in line with our requirements in the lease with the State of Florida. Recently, the County and FIU were notified that the Department of Environmental Protection Office of Inspector General is initiating an audit of the lease. FIU and the County are committed to working cooperatively with the Office of Inspector General and we remain confident that we are advancing the Playhouse project appropriately.

Next Steps to Accomplish the Coconut Grove Playhouse Project

The following are the next steps necessary to return great theater to Coconut Grove:

- Prevailing in the appeal of the Historic and Environmental Preservation Board's approval of the project's Certificate of Appropriateness at the City of Miami Commission meeting scheduled for December 14, 2017, 2:00 pm;
- Finalizing a MOU with MPA regarding the terms of the County's partnership in developing the garage and related development;
- Obtaining State approval for the development of the garage and related on-site development;
- Identifying a satisfactory developer/operator for the garage, residential and retail components;
- Completing regulatory reviews from various City of Miami review boards, including obtaining a final Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic and Environmental Preservation Board; Successfully completing a competitive bid process to identify a capable contractor with experience building complex projects; and
- Successfully managing the construction of the new theater and related development to be on time, on budget and of the quality standards insisted upon in the design documents.

The goal is to complete the Coconut Grove Playhouse project in time for the 2020-21 theater season, **but no later than the 2022 deadline in the lease with the State.**

For more information about the Coconut Grove Playhouse, please contact Michael Spring at (305) 375-3710.

Attachments:

Exhibit A – the County's Response to the HEPB Appeal and the Appeal
Exhibit B – the County's Response to the State Division of Historical Resources
Exhibit C – Frequently Asked Questions

- c: Michael Spring, Senior Advisor, Office of the Mayor, and Director, Department of Cultural Affairs
Abigail Price-Williams, County Attorney
Geri Bonzon-Keenan, First Assistant County Attorney
Dr. Mark B. Rosenberg, President, Florida International University
Dr. Kenneth Jessell, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration and Chief Financial Officer, Florida International University
Joseph Adler, Producing Artistic Director, GableStage

Honorable Chairman Esteban L. Bovo, Jr.
and Members, Board of County Commissioners
Page 7

Arthur Noriega, Chief Executive Officer, Miami Parking Authority
Scott Woolam, Senior Program Analyst, Division of State Lands, Florida Department of
Environmental Protection
Bernardo Fort-Brescia, Principal, Arquitectonica

APPEAL LETTER FOR COCONUT GROVE PLAYHOUSE
RESOLUTION HEPB R-17-023

April 19, 2017

Dear Hearing Boards Department,

As per Miami City Code Section 23-6.2 (e), this is a Written Notice of Appeal of the Historic and Environmental Preservation Board's (HEPB) approval on April 4, 2017, of a Certificate of Appropriateness (COA) for the Coconut Grove Playhouse located at 3500 Main Highway, Miami FL 33133. That COA was Item No. 03 on the HEPB agenda, file ID number/resolution number is HEPB R-17-023. The reasons and grounds for the appeal are as follows:

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1. The HEP Board was required to postpone consideration of the application until the interior of the Playhouse was properly evaluated as whether it has historical significance. The staff recommendation that the "Board does have authority to consider interior" was incorrect. Rather than accepting staff's recommendation for approval of this COA and the impression that the Board has no authority over the playhouse interior because of the designation report, the HEPB had the responsibility to direct staff to amend the flawed and inadequate historic designation report to include/consider the auditorium interior. The HEP Board was required to delay/deny the current COA application until such time as a proper and complete COA application package has been submitted and until the applicant has received comments on their proposal from the State Historic Preservation Office as is required under Florida Statute 267 *et seq.* and other applicable federal statutes.

2. The HEP Board decision should be overturned because the HEP Board did not have sufficient supporting data to issue a COA because the Board relied on an incomplete application, flawed technical advice, and a flawed and inadequate Historic Designation Report and Historic Structures Report. Based on expert testimony at the April 4, 2017 hearing, both documents were shown to be flawed. The interior should have been included based upon the Chapter 23-4 (c)(2)(c). Investigation in January 2017 revealed that despite prior renovations and damage from years of neglect a significant amount of the original historic fabric is still in place and is in very restorable condition. The HEP Board decision also relied on insufficient, inadequate, or flawed data concerning the conceptual master plan. Without sufficient data and drawings concerning massing, materials, and scale, the HEPB was unable to adequately evaluate the proposal to restore only the facades and to demolish the existing theater or how the theater connects and relates to the new construction. The HEP Board decision also relied on incomplete, inadequate, or flawed data concerning adverse impacts on the historic context, adjacent properties and neighborhoods including historic Charles Avenue, and traffic and parking, and the use of the bond funds for garage and retail.

3. The HEP Board was wrong when it approved a COA of the master plan without reviewing the aesthetics or other compatibility of the project in comparison to the theater. Rather, the HEP Board was required to consider the technical aesthetic components of what the overall composition of the site would entail. Here, the HEP Board has approved locations, demolition of

the main building, and construction of a parking garage, apartments, and retail stores without any architectural documentation.

Furthermore, the HEP Board approval of the COA of the master plan was done absent any review concerning the uses of new buildings which are included in the master plan. Rather the HEP Board was required to consider the compatibility between the existing structures, the surrounding neighborhood and existing businesses, and the new "appropriate buildings" that the site would entail. Here, the HEP Board has approved locations of new vastly larger buildings, demolition of the main building, and construction of a parking garage, apartments, and retail stores without any architectural documentation or studies regarding traffic, or the impact on the surrounding neighborhoods and businesses.

4. The approval by the HEP Board of the COA was contrary to City of Miami/Miami Dade County code because it improperly allows the applicant to continue moving forward with the "restoration" of the structure of the existing designated facades while being allowed to demolish the existing theater while the applicant continues to finalize the final 90% of the details of the additional buildings within the site.

This appeal is requested by the following aggrieved parties:

1. Barbara Lange is a resident of Miami-Dade County, and who lives in Coconut Grove at 3901 Braganza Ave. Miami FL 33133, spoke at the HEPB meeting on April 4, 2017. Ms. Lange is an aggrieved party because she is a homeowner in the City of Miami in close proximity to the Playhouse and she also spoke and presented evidence at the April 4, 2017 HEP Board hearing. Ms. Lange is a member of several neighborhood associations concerned with historic preservation and development issues in Coconut Grove and has long-standing involvement in these issues. As a resident of Miami-Dade County, Ms. Lange will be affected by any decision(s), including the April 4, 2017 resolution HEPB R-17-023, regarding the Playhouse due to the fact that Miami-Dade County has funded a portion of the project (\$15 million) with monies from the 2004 Building Better Communities GOB and additional monies (\$5 million) from the 2005 Convention Development Tax Bond, both of which have been issued.

2. Katrina Morris is a resident of Miami-Dade County, and who lives in Coconut Grove at 1430 Lybyer Ave. Miami FL 33133, spoke at the HEPB meeting on April 4, 2017. Ms. Morris is an aggrieved party because she is a homeowner in the City of Miami in close proximity to the Playhouse and she also spoke and presented evidence at the April 4, 2017 HEP Board hearing. As a resident of Miami-Dade County, Ms. Morris will be affected by any decisions regarding the Playhouse due to the fact that Miami-Dade County has funded a portion of the project (\$15 million) with monies from the 2004 Building Better Communities GOB and additional monies (\$5 million) from the 2005 Convention Development Tax Bond, both of which have been issued.

Accordingly, we respectfully appeal the decision, HEPB R-17-023, of the HEP Board and request that the City Commission order the HEP Board to withdraw the COA, or to award such other and further relief as the Commission may deem just and proper.

Please initiate the appeal process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Lowell J. Kuvin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lowell J. Kuvin, Esq.

Attorney for Ms. Lange & Ms. Morris



Miami Historic and Environmental Preservation Board

Resolution: HEPB-R-17-023

File ID 1960

April 4, 2017


Item HEPB.3

Mr. Todd Tragash offered the following resolution and moved its adoption:

A RESOLUTION OF THE MIAMI HISTORIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION BOARD APPROVING, WITH CONDITIONS (ATTACHED HERIN AS EXHIBIT "A") AN APPLICATION FOR A SPECIAL CERTIFICATE OF APPROPRIATENESS FOR THE MASTER SITE PLAN TO INCLUDE THE PARTIAL DEMOLITION OF AN EXISTING STRUCTURE, THE RECONSTRUCTION OF A THEATRE, AND THE NEW CONSTRUCTION OF A PARKING GARAGE WITH RESIDENTIAL UNITS AT THE INDIVIDUALLY DESIGNATED HISTORIC SITE AND KNOWN AS THE COCONUT GROVE PLAYHOUSE, LOCATED AT APPROXIMATELY 3500 MAIN HIGHWAY

Upon being seconded by Mr. Najeeb Campbell the motion passed as amended and was adopted by a vote of 4-1:

Mr. Najeeb Campbell	Yes
Mr. David Freedman	Absent Unexcused
Mr. Jonathan Gonzalez	Yes
Dr. William E. Hopper, Jr.	Yes
Ms. Lynn B. Lewis	No
Mr. Hugh Ryan	Absent Unexcused
Mr. Jordan Trachtenberg	Absent Unexcused
Mr. Todd Tragash	Yes


 Efrén Nuñez
 Interim Preservation Officer

4-7-17
 Execution Date

STATE OF FLORIDA }
 COUNTY OF MIAMI-DADE }

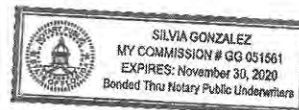
Personally appeared before me, the undersigned authority, Efrén Nuñez, Preservation Officer of the City of Miami, Florida, and acknowledges that she executed the foregoing Resolution.

SWORN AND SUBSCRIBED BEFORE ME THIS 7 DAY OF April, 2017.

Silvia Gonzalez
 Print Notary Name


 Notary Public State of Florida
 My Commission Expires: _____

Personally know or Produced I.D. 1
 Type and number of I.D. produced _____
 Did take an oath or Did not take an oath _____



Miami Historic and Environmental Preservation Board

Resolution: HEPB-R-17-023

EXHIBIT "A"

1. The original Kiehnel structure containing the South and East façades shall be preserved.
2. The South and East façades shall be restored to the Kiehnel phase of architecture.
3. The storefronts on the ground floor shall be reopened.
4. Any additions to the original building shall be in keeping with the Secretary of Interior's Standards for New Additions to Mid-size buildings.
5. Glass shall be clear with an option of low-E Coating.
6. All windows and doors that are visible from the right of way (as determined by staff) must match the configuration as shown in the historic photo attached to the staff report as Exhibit B.
7. Any ground disturbing work associated with the master plan shall be monitored by an archaeologist and an archaeological report detailing the monitoring which shall be submitted to the Historic Preservation Office.
8. This Certificate of Appropriateness is subject to approval by zoning, building, and all other required city and county departments.
9. The restoration of the facades of the historic structure shall be restored in accordance with the plans as prepared by Architectonica entitled "Coconut Grove Playhouse" consisting of 16 pages dated stamped received by the Preservation Office on March 6, 2016.
10. Staff recommends approval of the conceptual master plan as prepared by Architectonica entitled "Coconut Grove Playhouse" consisting of 16 pages dated stamped received by the Office of Historic Preservation on March 6, 2016. The Final Master Plan shall be developed in accordance with Section 5.7.2 entitled "Civic Institutional" of the Miami 21 Code.
11. No demolition permit will be issued until the plan comes back to the HEPB and is approved.
12. The concept that is being approved in this plan is in concept only, the HEPB has the purview to require different configurations, heights, setback etc. for the development of each individual building.
13. All the buildings will come collectively in one application to the HEPB.



**COUNTY ATTORNEY
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

111 N.W. FIRST STREET
SUITE 2810
MIAMI, FLORIDA 33128-1993
TEL (305) 375-5151
FAX (305) 375-5634

June 16, 2017

VIA HAND DELIVERY AND EMAIL

City of Miami City Commission
3500 Pan American Drive
Miami, Florida 33133

**Re: Appeal of City of Miami Historic and Environmental
Preservation Board Resolution R-17-023 approving Certificate
of Appropriateness for the Coconut Grove Playhouse**

Honorable Chairman Hardemon and City Commissioners:

Miami-Dade County (the "County") respectfully seeks permission to appear as a party in the above-referenced matter and hereby submits this response to the Appeal Letter for Coconut Grove Playhouse Resolution HEPB R-17-023, dated April 19, 2017, filed by Appellants Barbara Lange and Katrina Morris ("Appellants").¹

By way of background, in October 2005, the City of Miami Historic and Environmental Preservation Board ("HEPB") adopted Resolution HEPB-2005-60 (the "2005 Resolution"), designating the Coconut Grove Playhouse, located at 3500 Main Highway, Miami, Florida (the "Playhouse") as a historic site. The 2005 Resolution did not specifically designate the interior space of the Playhouse. This Commission upheld the 2005 Resolution on appeal.

¹ As the applicant for the Certificate of Appropriateness at issue, the tenant on the Coconut Grove Playhouse Property, and an interested party here, the County has a due process interest in this appeal and should be permitted to participate as a party as a matter of right. *Cf.* § 7.1.4.3, Miami 21 ("Applicant shall mean ... any person with a legal or equitable interest in the property for which an application or appeal thereof has been made and which is subject to quasi-judicial proceedings," and "Party shall mean the Applicant, the city staff, and any person recognized by the Decision-making body as a qualified Intervenor.").

This current appeal arises from the HEPB's approval, issued on April 4, 2017 and executed on April 7, 2017, of the County's request for a Certificate of Appropriateness ("COA") for the masterplan of the Playhouse. In accordance with a conceptual masterplan prepared by the architectural firm Arquitectonica International Corp. ("Arquitectonica"), the COA approved by the HEPB facilitates the preservation and restoration of the original Kiehnel and Elliott structure by restoring the entire front building, including the south and east facades specifically referenced in the 2005 designation report as being architecturally significant. Furthermore, the COA requires the County to bring final plans to the HEPB prior to the issuance of any demolition permit.

Appellants have appealed the issuance of the COA to this Commission, but lack standing to do so.² Nevertheless, the County will respond to the merits of Appellants' appeal herein, without waiving the right to challenge their standing in the event of subsequent judicial review.

Appellants advance four arguments in support of their appeal: (1) that the HEPB should have re-evaluated whether to designate the building's interior, and the State Division of Historical Resources should have been given an opportunity to provide comments, prior to approval of the COA; (2) that the HEPB relied upon insufficient and flawed evidence in approving the COA; (3) that the HEPB should not have approved the conceptual masterplan without reference to the aesthetics and compatibility of the project in relation to the site and neighborhood; and (4) that the approval was contrary to the City of Miami Code in that it allows for demolition on the site while the County continues to finalize details and plans for the project. The County responds to each argument in turn below.

² Appellants contend that they are "aggrieved parties" under the City's Historic Preservation Code with standing to appeal the decision below. The County disagrees. Appellants have not demonstrated more than a general interest in historic preservation matters in Coconut Grove, which is insufficient to make them "aggrieved parties" with standing to seek review of the COA. While the City's Historic Preservation Code does not define "aggrieved party," see §§ 23-2, 23-6.2(e), Florida courts interpreting similar terms have held that being "aggrieved" or "adversely affected" requires the party to show a specific injury, such as a direct impact to the party's property, and not just a "general interest" in the issue that is no greater than that of other residents. See *O'Connell v. Florida Dept. of Cmty. Affairs*, 874 So. 2d 673, 675 (Fla. 4th DCA 2004) ("a mere interest in a problem, no matter how longstanding the interest" is insufficient to render an appealing party "adversely affected or aggrieved") (internal citations omitted); *Renard v. Dade Cnty.*, 261 So. 2d 832, 837 (Fla. 1972). The fact that taxpayer dollars will be invested in the Playhouse project does not change the analysis because Appellants fail to show a special injury distinct from that of other taxpayers. See *Dep't. of Rev. v. Markham*, 396 So. 2d 1120, 1121 (Fla. 1981) ("a taxpayer may bring suit only upon a showing of special injury which is distinct from that suffered by other taxpayers in the taxing district"); *School Bd. of Volusia Co. v. Clayton*, 691 So. 2d 1066, 1068 (Fla. 1997).

1) Deferring consideration of the COA to allow for re-evaluation of the interior of the building is improper and unnecessary.

It is not appropriate to use the County's application for a COA based on the current designation to revisit whether the interior spaces of the Playhouse should also have been designated, not least because it has been more than 10 years since the HEPB designated the building's exterior and, in that proceeding, considered and rejected designation of the interior.

The City's Historic Preservation Code provides that interior spaces of a historic site are not generally subject to designation unless particularly described in the designation report. See § 23-4(c)(2)(c) of the Code. Here, the 2005 designation report for the Playhouse notes throughout that the interior spaces were significantly altered during Alfred Browning Parker's 1955 renovation of the property, and the report concludes that "[o]nly the south and east facades possess architectural significance." Designation Report at 14. As such, the Playhouse's interiors were specifically excluded from the 2005 designation.

While a designation may be amended "by following the same procedures" set forth in the ordinance (*i.e.*, proposal and preliminary evaluation of a proposed site, preparation of a designation report, public notice, and a public hearing on the proposed designation), the Code does not provide for amending a designation during consideration of a COA, as Appellants seem to request here. Compare § 23-4(c)(8) with § 23-6.2.

In addition, if the HEPB had considered the scope of the designation to be inadequate, it should have addressed and modified it in 2005. It did not do so. Now, more than a decade has passed since the designation, without any amendments to include the interior spaces. The County was therefore entitled to rely on the 2005 designation in expending resources to redevelop the site. The County hired a team of experts to research the history and significance of the site and provide recommendations that would be respectful of the historic nature of the site. Similar to the 2005 designation report, the results of the extensive research conducted by preservation architect and professor Jorge L. Hernandez and his team concluded that the most significant extant portion of the site is the iconic corner building that has served as the southern gateway to the Coconut Grove community. The conceptual masterplan presented to, and approved by, the HEPB provides a vision that will revitalize that iconic building.

Moreover, the County prepared that conceptual master plan at the suggestion of, and in coordination with, the City's Historic Preservation staff. The County also accepted Historic Preservation staff's recommendations: to provide an informational session on the project to the HEPB, which the County did on February 7, 2017; to apply for a COA for the conceptual master plan, which it did on March 6, 2017; and to submit a second and final COA application once the project's details are more fully developed, which the County has committed to doing at the appropriate time. This process was purposefully designed to establish a collaborative relationship with the HEPB, providing early formal opportunities for board review and input on the masterplan.

Having expended significant time and public resources utilizing the 2005 designation and relying on the COA process as recommended by City Historic Preservation staff, the County has acquired a vested right to proceed in accordance with the 2005 designation. It would be improper and inequitable to now change course and amend the parameters of the designation more than 10 years after the building was originally designated. Doing so would require, quite literally, going back to the drawing board, and the financial resources, time, and effort expended on this project to date would have been all for naught.

Aside from the legal reasons for not revisiting the original designation through this proceeding, there is really no practical reason to do so either. The County has committed on the record that it intends to preserve and incorporate original portions of the Kiehnel and Elliott interior in the renovation project. At the April 4, 2017 HEPB meeting, the County and its historic preservation consultant, Jorge L. Hernandez, testified that the interior of the theater would be investigated thoroughly, and that any existing elements from the 1927 building would be further evaluated for preservation and incorporation in the new design for the theater. In addition, in its COA application, the County committed to “[s]urvey, document and incorporate the remaining, historic architectural elements (e.g., the proscenium arch, Solomonic columns and other features that will be investigated in the subsequent design phases being undertaken) into the design of a new state-of-the-art theater and [to] orient the theater on axis with the original theater and its corner entrance through the historic front building.” 3/21/2017 County Letter of Intent at 3. So, in fact, the County wants to see as much of the original design preserved as possible, and has committed to ensuring that the key features of the original building – including interior features – are incorporated in the renovation and preserved for posterity. Appellants’ argument to the contrary is therefore misplaced.

Appellants’ related argument that the HEPB was required to defer consideration of the County’s COA application until the State Division of Historical Resources (the “Division”) provides comments is likewise mistaken. First, no such requirement exists in either the lease between the State, as owner of the Playhouse and the property upon which it sits, and the County and Florida International University, as co-lessees of the property, nor in any state statute or regulation. Second, throughout the planning process, the County has maintained regular contact with the State, both with its Department of Environmental Protection as manager of the lease agreement, as well as with the Division. Representatives from both State offices have participated in informational meetings regarding the development of the masterplan and have been notified of all milestone events and regulatory hearings. In addition, Division staff completed a site inspection of the Playhouse in November 2016, and received the County’s COA application in advance of the April 4, 2017 HEPB meeting. The Division has expressed to the County that it typically reviews projects at the 90 percent construction document phase and that the preponderance of the reviews should occur at the local level. Appellants thus advocate for a process that is contrary to the one followed by the State.

2) The HEPB's decision approving the COA was based on substantial, thoroughly-researched, and well-supported evidence.

Appellants incorrectly assert that the evidence before the HEPB was flawed, inadequate, and insufficient.³ Rather, the County submitted a complete COA application for the conceptual masterplan, and presented competent substantial evidence in support of that application at the HEPB hearing.

Although this Commission's review is *de novo*, see § 23-6.2(e) of the Code, Appellants have raised the sufficiency and adequacy of the evidence below as a basis for their appeal. As such, it is appropriate for this Commission to consider whether the evidence presented below was substantial and competent. *Cf. Miami-Dade Cnty. v. Omnipoint Holdings, Inc.*, 863 So. 2d 195, 198-99 (Fla. 2003). "Competent substantial evidence" means evidence "sufficiently relevant and material that a reasonable mind would accept it as adequate to support the conclusion reached." *Village of Palmetto Bay v. Palmer Trinity Private Sch., Inc.*, 128 So. 3d 19, 25 (Fla. 3d DCA 2012).

The Code provides that "[t]he applicant [for a COA] shall submit to the preservation officer an application together with supporting exhibits, other materials, and any applicable fees," and that "[n]o application shall be deemed complete until all supporting materials required have been provided[.]" § 23-6.2(b)(2). Here, the County submitted a complete application with a letter of intent regarding the restoration project, a historic report on the Playhouse, and a proposal with drawings for the restoration by Arquitectonica. Those materials satisfied the Code requirements and were accepted, and deemed complete, by City staff.

At the HEPB hearing itself, City staff made a presentation on the County's application and recommended approval. The analysis presented by City Historic Preservation staff itself constitutes competent substantial evidence. *See City of Hialeah Gardens v. Miami-Dade Charter Found., Inc.*, 857 So. 2d 202, 205 (Fla. 3d DCA 2003). In addition, Michael Spring, Director of the County's Department of Cultural Affairs, provided an introduction to the project, and the County's consultants offered testimony and evidence in support of the COA application. Specifically, historic preservation architect Jorge L. Hernandez presented historic research and recommendations for the project, and principal design architect Bernardo Fort-Brescia presented the conceptual masterplan prepared by Arquitectonica.

The abovementioned materials and testimony together constituted evidence "sufficiently relevant and material that a reasonable mind would accept it as adequate to support" approval of the County's application. *See Palmer Trinity Private Sch.*, 128 So. 3d at 25; *see also Miami-Dade Charter Found., Inc.*, 857 So. 2d at 204 (competent substantial evidence includes "relevant fact-based statements, whether expert or not," as well as documents, maps, plans, and other materials in the record).

³ To the extent that this argument rests on the belief that the interior features should have been designated as historic, that argument has been addressed and refuted above.

That other architects offered testimony in opposition to the project, and some members of the public spoke against it, does not mean that the evidence presented by the County, the County's architects, and City preservation staff was flawed, inadequate, or insufficient. To the contrary, the board was free to credit the County's evidence and the recommendation of its professional staff, and approve the application, as it did here. See *Dusseau v. Metro. Dade Cnty. Bd. of Cnty. Comm'rs*, 794 So. 2d 1270, 1276 (Fla. 2001) (“[a]s long as the record contains competent substantial evidence to support the [board's] decision, the decision is presumed lawful”; contrary evidence “is irrelevant to the lawfulness of the decision”).

As such, Appellants' argument that the HEPB relied upon flawed, inadequate, and insufficient evidence is incorrect and not a basis to disturb the HEPB's decision below.

3) Evidence of neighborhood compatibility, traffic impacts, and similar zoning considerations is irrelevant to the COA.

Appellants wrongly contend that the HEPB should have reviewed neighborhood compatibility, traffic impacts, impacts on surrounding residences and businesses, and similar considerations prior to approving the COA for the masterplan.

In so arguing, Appellants appear to invoke classic zoning-type considerations that have nothing to do with historic preservation. Compatibility, traffic impacts, and like matters are appropriately dealt with at a later time, during the zoning phase of the project, as the HEPB's approval expressly recognizes. Res. HEPB-R-17-023, Ex. A at ¶ 8 (“This [COA] is subject to approval by zoning, building, and all other required city and county departments.”); see also *Metro. Dade Cty. v. Section 11 Prop. Corp.*, 719 So. 2d 1204, 1205 (Fla. 3d DCA 1998) (compatibility is a proper zoning consideration).

By contrast, the HEPB's consideration of a request for COA is governed by specific provisions of the Historic Preservation Code. The Code instructs that work proposed in an application for a COA:

shall not adversely affect the historic, architectural, or aesthetic character of the subject structure or the relationship and congruity between the subject structure and its neighboring structures and surroundings, including but not limited to form, spacing, height, yards, materials, color, or rhythm and pattern of window and door openings in building facades; nor shall the proposed work adversely affect the special character or special historic, architectural or aesthetic interest or value of the overall historic site or historic district.

Sec. 23-6.2(h). These criteria relate to the architectural features of the structure, not to impacts of the use of the property. The County gave proper consideration to the correct standards when formulating the conceptual masterplan for the project, and the HEPB

likewise applied the correct standards in approving the COA. To consider an alternate set of criteria not called for by the City Code would be improper and unwarranted.

That said, even if Appellants' alternative criteria were relevant here, the COA would nevertheless pass muster. The County's conceptual masterplan for a 300-seat theater and supporting structures is of a far more appropriate scale and context in relation to the surrounding area than the existing 1,150-seat theater, or even a 700-seat theater advocated by some opponents of the County's plan. The masterplan clearly identifies the uses of the new buildings, the overall composition on the site, and its context within the neighborhood. The parking garage is depicted on the site of the existing surface parking, closest to the adjacent commercial areas, lower than the adjacent permitted new mixed-use development to the north, and deliberately separated from the historic front building.

Further, the architectural team revisited the location of both driveways and support spaces at the rear of the site in response to concerns regarding the scale and relationship of the project to the adjacent residential neighborhood. The architectural drawings presented at the HEPB hearing showed measures to screen the service driveway off of Charles Avenue, extensive landscaping utilized to develop a landscape buffer between the project and the residential neighborhood, and the strategic location of lower level support buildings nearest to the residential neighborhood, to maintain an appropriate relationship in terms of scale. Also, the stage house volume – the tallest element of the theater – is proposed to be closer to the center of the site in comparison with the existing stage house location. This is a deliberate gesture, to shield the view of tallest portion of the project from the surrounding properties. The conceptual masterplan also contemplates uses that are in keeping with the site's original uses: theater, retail/restaurant, office, and residential.

Contrary to Appellants' argument, then, the proposed masterplan thus contemplates development that is in keeping with the current historical scale and context of the neighborhood.

4) The COA will not result in the demolition of any portion of the site until the HEPB reviews and approves final plans.

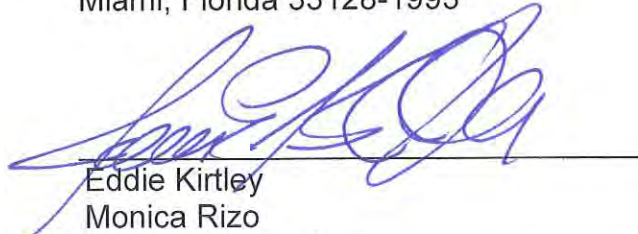
Appellants incorrectly argue that the HEPB's approval violates the Code by allowing for demolition of the Playhouse while the County continues to finalize details and plans for the project.

To the contrary, the COA plainly states that the approval is "in concept only," that the HEPB will have to review the final details of the project at a later date, and that "[n]o demolition permit will be issued until the [final] plan comes back to the HEPB and is approved." Res. HEPB-R-17-023, Ex. A at ¶¶ 11-13. In the interim, the Playhouse shall remain intact, and no alteration or demotion may, or will, occur.

In conclusion, Appellants' grounds for appeal are mistaken and without merit. The County therefore respectfully requests that the City Commission deny this appeal, uphold the HEPB's decision below, and allow the County to continue with its vision to restore the Playhouse for the entire community to enjoy.

Respectfully submitted,

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cc: Office of the City Clerk
City Historic Preservation Division
City Attorney's Office

From: Parsons, Timothy A. [<mailto:Timothy.Parsons@dos.myflorida.com>]
Sent: Tuesday, November 07, 2017 6:40 PM
To: Spring, Michael (Office of the Mayor) <Michael.Spring@miamidade.gov>; Tomlinson, Angela E. <Angela.Tomlinson@DOS.MyFlorida.com>
Cc: Fitz-Patrick, Christie (Burrus) <Christie.Fitz-Patrick@dos.myflorida.com>; Rodriguez, Yasha <Yasha.Rodriguez@dos.myflorida.com>; Denis, Marie (CUA) <Marie.Denis@miamidade.gov>; Kirtley, Eddie (CAO) <Eddie.Kirtley@miamidade.gov>; Cody, Sarah (RER) <Sarah.CodyAdelman@miamidade.gov>; Storhoff, Timothy P. <Timothy.Storhoff@dos.myflorida.com>
Subject: Re: important info needed DHR

Michael,

Thank you for your patience in awaiting this reply. As you know, I've been out of the office and I wanted to confer with DHR staff before responding.

After technical review of Special Category Grant Application 19.h.sc.100.166 (Coconut Grove Playhouse) from Miami-Dade County, the Division of Historical Resources reached a determination of ineligibility for the grant application, due to inconsistency of the proposed project with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Historic Preservation (the "Secretary's Standards"). This determination was discussed with me in detail before it was finalized, and I agreed with our staff's assessment.

In further explanation of this determination of ineligibility, please note that the Special Category Grant program is governed by Chapter 1A-39, Florida Administrative Code, and the Special Category Grants Guidelines that are incorporated therein. Pursuant to Rule 1A-39.001(7)(c), F.A.C., all grant work funded by the Division must conform to the standards contained in the Secretary's Standards, and additionally, the Special Category Grant Guidelines, in Section IV.4, provide that expenditures for work not consistent with the Secretary's Standards are non-allowable for expenditure of grant funds and as contributions to required match.

This project, as presented in the application and associated attachments (including architectural drawings), does not conform to the Secretary's Standards, in that if carried out as proposed it would not comply with the following Standards for Rehabilitation:

Standard No. 1. A property will be used as it was historically or be given a new use that requires minimal change to its distinctive materials, features, spaces and spatial relationships.

Standard No. 2. The historic character of a property will be retained and preserved. The removal of distinctive materials or alteration of features, spaces and spatial relationships that characterize a property will be avoided.

Standard No. 4. Changes to a property that have acquired historic significance in their own right will be retained and preserved.

Standard No. 5. Distinctive materials, features, finishes and construction techniques or examples of craftsmanship that characterize a property will be preserved.

Standard No. 6. Deteriorated historic features will be repaired rather than replaced. Where the severity of deterioration requires replacement of a distinctive feature, the new feature will match the old in design, color, texture and, where possible, materials. Replacement of missing features will be substantiated by documentary and physical evidence.

Standard No. 9. New additions, exterior alterations, or related new construction will not destroy historic materials, features, and spatial relationships that characterize the property. The new work will be differentiated from the old and will be compatible with the historic materials, features, size, scale and proportion, and massing to protect the integrity of the property and its environment.

Standard No. 10. New additions and adjacent or related new construction will be undertaken in such a manner that, if removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the historic property and its environment would be unimpaired.

As proposed, this project will result in the loss of integrity of the building. The entire interior of the building would be replaced as part of the proposed structural work. Plans submitted with the application show the complete loss of the interior organization of the front building. In addition, the historic theater space where the activities that make this property significant would be demolished to construct a new building. This would render the property ineligible for the National Register under its significance as a theater.

These findings during technical review of Application 19.h.sc.100.166, supported a determination of ineligibility due to inconsistency with the Secretary's Standards, and as a result, the application was placed in "Ineligible" status in the DOS Grants Online System (www.dosgrants.com) on September 5, 2017, as shown in the application's online Activity Log. On September 5, automatically generated messages were sent to individuals shown in the grants system as Organization Managers and Submitters. The Organization Managers and Submitters for Miami-Dade County are:

Daniels, LaTousha	latousha.daniels@miamidade.gov	Submitter
Spring, Michael	ms4@miamidade.gov	Organization Manager
Leslie, Marialaura	Marialaura.Leslie@miamidade.gov	Organization Manager
Leslie, Marialaura	ML8@miamidade.gov	Organization Manager

I hope that this clarifies the situation and answers your questions. As you know I am a supporter of the County's efforts to revitalize the Coconut Grove Playhouse and return it to its former vibrancy. A determination of ineligibility for this grant certainly isn't a judgement on the value of the proposed work. However, what is proposed isn't allowable under this grant program. Please let me know if you have any additional questions, or if there is anything else that I can clarify.

Best,
Tim

Timothy Parsons, Ph.D., RPA

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November 28, 2017

Dr. Timothy A. Parsons, Ph.D., RPA
Division Director, and State Historic Preservation Officer
Florida Department of State
Division of Historical Resources
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Tallahassee, Florida 32399

Re: Special Category Grant Application – Coconut Grove Playhouse

Dear Dr. Parsons:

Tim,

First and foremost, we would like to thank you for your candor and detailed explanation of the determination of ineligibility regarding the Special Category Grant. Though our professional analysis differs, we appreciate the opportunity to keep an open dialogue with you and your staff regarding the future of the Coconut Grove Playhouse. With that in mind, we offer our thoughts on your staff's assessment.

We would like to reiterate that the application addressed work to restore, rehabilitate, and reinvigorate the historic front building, designed by Richard Kiehnel in 1927. With the exception of egress stairways and an elevator to address life-safety issues, the proposed project recaptures the historic spatial configuration of the interior of the structure. It also restores the façade, with its original architectural details, and reopens the historic storefronts, bringing vibrancy and life back to the Playhouse at the iconic streetfront façade. As detailed in the local historic designation report, this front building, specifically the south and east façades, are the most architecturally significant features of the site.

The assessment provided appears to be based on an assumption that the rear building, which houses the auditorium, retains its historic integrity. While it was part of the original build-out of the Coconut Grove Playhouse, subsequent additions and alterations by Alfred Browning Parker, and later by Ferguson Glasgow Schuster, Inc., among others, have altered the historic space in such a way that its integrity has, unfortunately, been lost.

While Alfred Browning Parker is, inarguably, a master architect, in terms of his additions to the Playhouse, his most significant design elements were housed in the lobby preceding the auditorium. Those design elements no longer remain in place today, as they were removed during later renovations. Within the auditorium itself, his alterations can be understood as a project of expedience; he addressed the programmatic needs of the theater space, without consideration of how his alterations interacted with the significant architectural features of the original Kiehnel design. For example, his reconfiguration of space left columns, arches, and fountains partially buried in concrete.

The result of this work was a degradation of the historic auditorium space, and an ultimate loss of integrity.

The grant application proposed a master plan that was considered at a public hearing by the City of Miami Historic and Environmental Preservation Board. The associated staff report recommended approval with a series of conditions. The positive recommendation from staff indicates that they evaluated the proposed work against the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, as required, and determined it to be in compliance. The approval by the Board affirms that.

With regard to the individual Standards, we have assessed the work proposed for the historic front building, which is the only original space that retains its historic character and integrity:

Standard 1: The building is being returned to its historic use, defining a formal entry experience for visitors to the auditorium, and engaging with pedestrians through the reopening of the historic storefronts.

Standard 2: The historic character is being retained and restored to its original design, as documented in historic period photographs. Distinctive architectural features, such as the storefronts, and parapet details, that were removed over time, are being restored.

Standard 4: While it can be argued that the design elements introduced by Alfred Browning Parker in the lobby area during the 1950s acquired historic significance in their own right, those were later removed. Parker's work within the auditorium space itself is not architecturally significant; in reality, it degrades the integrity of the interior space.

Standard 5: The distinctive materials, features, and finishes that characterize the historic structure are to be preserved in the proposed project. As documented, the front building is the most architecturally significant portion of the overall site. This building, and its individual architectural features, are being restored. Significant architectural elements that characterized the auditorium, prior to the introduction of insensitive alterations, are being proposed for reuse, to the greatest extent possible. This includes, notably, the double proscenium arch. Other elements that are not feasible for reuse, such as the auditorium columns, are being proposed for display and interpretation.

Standard 6: Deteriorated historic features are proposed for repair and restoration. Missing features, such as the storefronts and original parapet, are proposed for replacement based on historic period documentation.

Standard 8: Any ground disturbing work will be monitored by an archaeologist and an archaeological report detailing the monitoring shall be submitted to the Historic Preservation Office.

Standard 9: The new construction is proposed in place of the existing auditorium building, which has lost its historic integrity over time. The new construction is compatible in size, scale, proportion, massing and spatial relationship. The new theater will be located along the same axis as the original

auditorium. It will be distinguishable from the historic building through its material and setback. It is important to note that it is compatible in terms of spatial and visual relationships as well. When seen from the primary public viewshed of Main Highway and Charles Avenue, the historic building remains the visually dominant element, with the new addition only visible when visitors travel through the historic building, or approach from the rear of the property.

Standard 10: The front building is the only extant building that retains its historic integrity and character. The proposed new addition, if removed in the future, would not alter the essential form or integrity of the historic building.

It was stated that as proposed, this project will result in the loss of integrity of the building. In reality, the historic integrity of the auditorium building was degraded over time through a series of insensitive alterations. The front building is the most architecturally significant, and retains the greatest degree of integrity. The project, as proposed, seeks to not only restore the front building, but to breathe new life into one of the County's great cultural sites.

Based on its historic context, the Coconut Grove Playhouse is currently eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. However, in reality, the loss of integrity to the auditorium space has already made the property ineligible for listing under its significance as a theater. It maintains its eligibility based on its architectural significance and as a work of Richard Kiehnel; our project aims to celebrate that history and restore the former vibrancy of the Playhouse as an iconic part of the Coconut Grove community.

Again, we thank you for your consideration and your support of our revitalization efforts. We look forward to our continued relationship, and to the on-going dialogue as we continue our work to rehabilitate the Playhouse.

Sincerely,



Michael Spring
Senior Advisor, Office of the Mayor
Director, Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs

COCONUT GROVE PLAYHOUSE PROJECT
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

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THE WORK UNDERWAY

What's been done?

Q: What's been done?

A: Since the Coconut Grove Playhouse failed and closed the theater's doors, the following has been accomplished:

- ☑ Executed the Long-term Lease: the Coconut Grove Playhouse property was reverted by and returned to State of Florida ownership, and in 2013 a lease entered in to with Florida International University and Miami-Dade County as co-lessees, providing an initial 50-year term, with two 25-year renewals
- ☑ Re-confirmed \$20 million in County funds: Miami-Dade County re-authorized the \$20 million that had been appropriated specifically to return the Coconut Grove Playhouse to a working theater (\$5 Million in County-directed revenues and \$15 million in voter-approved bond funds)
- ☑ Approved a Comprehensive Business Plan for the Playhouse's Redevelopment and Operation: a condition of and attachment to the long-term lease with the State, a detailed Business Plan addressing both construction and operations was developed, and unanimously approved by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), the Board of Trustees of Florida International University (FIU), and *twice* by the Florida Cabinet and Governor
- ☑ Conducted the open, competitive selection process for architectural, engineering, and specialty consultant services conducted: the team led by Arquitectonica, which includes historic preservation architect Jorge Hernandez among a stellar list of consultants and specialists, was the highest ranked team out of nine teams competing. The contract was approved by the Board of County Commissioners on April 21, 2015. That team is contracted to provide all required architectural and engineering services from conceptual design through the completion of construction.
- ☑ Completed the Masterplanning, Schematic Design, and Design Development: through the Arquitectonica contract, in addition to architects and the historic preservation architect, specialty consultants with the following areas of expertise are hard at work on the Playhouse project: Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Fire Protection Engineering; Structural Engineering and Threshold Inspection Services; Civil Engineering, Site Development, Parking Lot Design and Traffic Engineering Studies; Landscape Architecture; Theater Design and Systems; Acoustical, Sound and Communications Design and Systems; Cost Estimating; Scheduling; Building Envelope Engineering; Security; LEED/Sustainability; and Signage and Wayfinding. Among the scopes of work accomplished are: land and boundary surveying work; soil, foundation and geotechnical testing; comprehensive research and detailed measured drawings of the building's history and historic features; historic materials testing and paint sampling; structural investigations; asbestos survey work; site masterplanning and building program verification; schematic design; design development, including detailed site plans, drawings, elevations and renderings, and technical drawings for permit review; new permit filings; traffic study; etc.

300 SEATS IS RIGHT-SIZED

Why the Playhouse failed

Q: Why did the Coconut Grove Playhouse fail and what led to its having to close its doors?

A: The Playhouse had a history of boom and bust cycles, starting with the original 1927 silent movie house that closed after only a few years of operation, even after adding sound for “talkies” in an effort to adapt to the times. The subsequent attempts to adapt the Playhouse for uses other than its original design as a movie theater led to its eventual failure.

A succession of owners eliminated the vast majority of the interior historic elements in efforts to convert the movie house into a working, live theater. What remains today is evidence of these unsuccessful attempts:

- the auditorium chamber was compressed by more than one-third to create a larger lobby area;
- interior features were eliminated to retrofit positions for stage lighting, sound and theater rigging; and
- added concrete raised the elevation and changed the rake of the auditorium floor, and an entire mezzanine was added, eliminating and/or entombing more historic interior features and creating poor and obstructed sight-lines.

These changes were accompanied by evolving audience preferences that no longer supported a larger theater. The growth of Miami’s cultural life has provided more options for cultural events and newer venues with 21st century accommodations to present performing arts productions. In its final decade, the limitations of the Playhouse, its diminishing audiences, and the expensive overhead of a physical plant that was too large and inefficient resulted in massive, accumulated deficits, forcing its most recent failure and closing of its doors.

Seating size

Q: What is the capacity of the existing auditorium vs. the proposed theater? Why reduce the seating size?

A: The seating capacity of the existing auditorium is 1150 seats. The proposed theater will have 300 seats, as specified in the Business Plan that is part of the lease with the State. It is significant to note that the existing movie theater seating was designed well before today’s more rigorous accessibility and egress codes and that the silent movie house was not designed to take into consideration necessary theatrical elements such as sight-lines and lighting positions. Adaptations to the movie house in the 1950’s attempted to improve

the seating rake, but were not able to provide the standards necessary for a twenty-first century theater.

Factors contributing to the inability in this market to fill a larger house year-round at the Coconut Grove Playhouse include:

- More audience choices with the opening of other large venues such as the Adrienne Arsht Center for the Performing Arts, which was built specifically for large-scale productions and art forms: Broadway musicals (which themselves offer a total of only 8 performances per show in Miami-Dade County); ballet; opera; orchestral concerts; etc.;
- Today's audiences' expectations of higher quality experiences, including superb theatrical production values, a closer and more intimate relationship with the action on stage for dramatic theater, and up-to-date accommodations for comfort and accessibility; and
- The additional availability of other forms of entertainment, including on-demand programming through multiple media platforms.

The new 300-seat state-of-the-art theater proposed will provide an intimate experience for audiences and performers that would not be possible in a larger house. For the presentation of dramatic theater, this sense of immediacy with the action on stage is key to creating a magical, live experience for audiences. With the new design, audience comfort and sight-lines are a priority, along with providing universal access to welcome and accommodate all audiences.

The impact of a bigger theater

Q: In real terms, what would a bigger theater do to Coconut Grove?

A: A bigger theater (e.g., in the 500-to-750 seat range) would trigger the following:

- More nightly traffic in Coconut Grove as a result of the increased volume of theater patrons coming at peak hours and leaving late at night;
- More density on the site to account for the footprint of the larger theater and its support spaces, ***eliminating*** the current plan's pedestrian features, including:
 - plazas;
 - landscaping;
 - the promenade connecting the residential neighborhood to Main Highway; and
 - the park designed for the residential side of the parking garage;
- A potentially larger, taller parking garage structure;
- Even greater detrimental impact on the residential neighborhood to the west due to:
 - minimal, if any, buffers between the theater buildings and the street;
 - the likelihood of more traffic up and down the residential streets; and
 - perpetuating the walling off of this residential community from downtown Coconut Grove;

- A greater cost to operate, resulting in an unworkable business model, similar to those that caused the Playhouse's repeated past failures; and
- A loss of the critical sense of intimacy between performers and audiences, known throughout the professional theater industry to be essential to today's theater-goers who demand as immersive an experience as possible.

More seats = the certainty of more cost, without the certainty of more revenue

Q: Wouldn't more seats generate more revenue?

A: More seats would generate more revenue only if they are sold seats. Yet, on a daily basis, a larger theater costs more to operate and sustain (higher utility fees, more staff required, more maintenance, etc.). If performances achieve less than the requisite attendance needed to cover the higher operating costs, deficits mount up. Given all the growing entertainment options available and from which to choose, it is increasing difficult to fill a large house with a live audience.

Leading experts on right-sizing the theater

Q: What do leading, national theater experts think about a 300-seat theater?

A: David Ives, Award-winning American playwright (including MacArthur; Guggenheim; Helen Hayes; Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk Awards) recently wrote the following:

"A 700-seat theatre, it seems to me, won't work. It would in fact be absurd. With 300 seats you have the necessary intimacy, the proportion that makes for good close-up *humane* theatre. And you can fill 300 seats if you're resourceful and tasteful. A 700-seat theatre is begging for trouble. I don't frankly know what kind of show you could put into a house of that size. It wouldn't be a house, it would be more of a warehouse, and probably largely empty at that. Here in New York, theatres tend to run at 99 seats (off-off), or 299 seats (off-) or a thousand seats or more (Broadway). There used to be some 500-seat houses but they've pretty much gone. The reason is Darwinian: time and experience have shown theatre owners and artistic directors that those are the comfortable sizes for theatres."

A: Marco Ramirez, Miamian, Award-winning playwright/film & TV screenwriter/producer (including Obie, Outer Critics Circle and Drama Desk Awards; credits include "Orange is the New Black," "Sons of Anarchy," "The Defenders") writes:

"My love for the theatre was born at Gablestage ...it was the intimate, emotionally stirring performance I saw at GableStage (their 1999 adaptation of Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*) that spawned my love for theatre. Not for big, traveling Broadway

shows. Not for massive sets and parades of costumes. But for a smaller, smarter kind of theatre. The kind where a cast of six actors (or less) delves into ethical issues, historical events (GableStage's 2002 production of *The Diary of Anne Frank*), race relations (their 2004 *Master Harold and the Boys*), or the nature of human sexuality (their 2003 production of Edward Albee's *The Goat*)."

A: Deborah Zoe Laufer, Award-winning playwright (including Helen Merrill and Lilly Awards) provides these observations:

"This past August, I had the enormous pleasure of directing my play, *Informed Consent*, at GableStage.... I've had over 100 productions of my plays around the country (and overseas), but I was blown away by the quality of the work done there - the level of design realized in that somewhat difficult space, and the challenging work Joe chooses to produce.... The idea that a 700 seat space would be preferable to a 300 seat space is the kind of thinking that someone who isn't involved with theater would have. A 700 seat space would require the mounting of big musicals or plays that have a "name" and don't require any real intimacy. A 300 seat space will allow GableStage to grow, while still doing the cutting edge work it's known for."

This [link](#) provides the entire letters excerpted above.

Other 300-seat theaters in Miami-Dade County

Q: Are there other theaters in Miami-Dade County in the 300-seat range?

A: While a few theaters exist in Miami-Dade County within the 300-400 seat range, such as Miami Theater Center in Miami Shores (330 seats) and the Miracle Theater in Coral Gables (100, 300, and 600 seats), these venues are programmed by resident producing organizations that manage them. The new 300-seat theater proposed for the Coconut Grove Playhouse will be purposefully designed and built for twenty-first century theater, creating a complex specifically developed to serve as one of the nation's great regional theaters and presenting the best of contemporary and classical dramatic theater.

Is a larger theater contemplated?

Q: Is there a larger, 700-seat theater scheme contemplated?

A: The plan approved by the Board of County Commissioners, FIU and the State of Florida is for a complex that features a 300-seat theater. Miami-Dade County, through its executed contracts and agreements, is advancing and implementing this plan.

A larger, costlier 700-seat theater is being contemplated by the Coconut Grove Theater Foundation, Inc. To date, the Coconut Grove Theater Foundation, Inc.:

- *has not* provided substantiation for raising any private funds for its concept;
- *has not* identified an operating company with a track record for producing performing arts activities to manage a larger theater;
- *has not* offered a programming plan and an updated operating model to establish the financial viability of its scheme;
- *has not* demonstrated a realistic approach to siting its conceptual design for a larger, 700-seat theater;
- *has not* developed a capital cost estimate for its larger theater;
- *has not* indicated its strategy for securing the necessary funds to achieve the design and construction of its larger theater.

RESPECTING THE HISTORY OF THE PLAYHOUSE

The historic designation of the property

Q: Is the property designated historic? And if so, what makes it historic?

A: The Coconut Grove Playhouse was designated historic by the City of Miami's Historic and Environmental Preservation Board in 2005 via Resolution HEPB-2005-60. It is important to note that the designation report outlines the front façade as the feature with the extant architectural significance. The designation report is available at: <http://www.historicpreservationmiami.com/pdfs/Coconut%20Grove%20Playhouse%20-%20FINAL%20-%202005-27-05.pdf>

The history of the site and the new theater

Q: How will the history of the site be preserved and/or incorporated into the new theater?

A: The entire historic front building, the iconic view that has been the Southern threshold to the Coconut Grove commercial area on Main Highway, will be restored, including the reconstruction of the 1927 Kiehnel and Elliott design of the parapet at the corner entry, the restoration of the street level storefronts along Main Highway and Charles Avenue, and the return of the building's original sienna color. The remaining original Kiehnel and Elliott elements in the auditorium, which include the solomonic columns, fountains, the proscenium arch, decorative grates and cornice will be saved and incorporated into the design of the new theater.

The façade of the new theater

Q: Why doesn't the façade of the new theater look more historic?

A: Historic preservation principles encourage the clear distinction between the historic portion of a project and new construction. The proposed façade for the new theater building takes its cue from the coral rock walls and the lush tree canopies that are distinctive features of Coconut Grove. The naturalistic and low-profile design of the exterior of new theater serves as a non-competing backdrop for the historic building and is in keeping with the unique, sub-tropical character of Coconut Grove. The buildings will tell a story with their materials and style; that story celebrates and honors the past while also articulating the excitement of the future.

YEARS OF PUBLIC PROCESS TO GET TO PROGRESS

The public review process

Q: Was the Playhouse project publicly reviewed and what authority does the County have to develop this project?

A: The plan proposed by Miami-Dade County has been reviewed extensively and approved at public meetings of the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), the Florida Cabinet and Governor, and by the Board of Trustees of Florida International University (FIU). A list of reports and approval items reviewed and approved at public meetings of the BCC can be accessed by [clicking here](#).

The terms of the lease with the State

Q: What are the terms of the lease from the State of Florida and what does it require from Miami-Dade County and Florida International University, as co-lessees?

A: The approved lease includes a Business Plan (or "land use" plan) that stipulates:

- An initial term of 50 years and two 25-year renewals;
- The use of the approved \$20 million of County bond funds for the Playhouse with completion of the capital project by 2022;
- GableStage's track-record as an outstanding artistic organization and its competency as the selected theater operator for the Playhouse;
- The potential of pursuing additional compatible development on the property (e.g., a parking garage and the restored ground-level retail in the historic front building) with the objective of generating additional revenues principally dedicated to ensure the viability and success of GableStage's and FIU's cultural and educational programming at the Playhouse;
- Miami-Dade County's successful track record for working with non-profit cultural organizations to manage the County's cultural facilities.

The State of Florida required this level of specificity in the approved lease to ensure that there was a detailed and doable plan to return great theater to the Playhouse.

The selection of the design team led by Arquitectonica

Q: How was Arquitectonica, a firm known for its modern designs, selected to work on a historic property?

A: Miami-Dade County conducted a competitive selection process for architectural, engineering, and specialty consultant services for the master planning, schematic design, design development, construction documents, and construction administration of the project. The team led by Arquitectonica, which includes historic preservation architect Jorge Hernandez among a stellar list of consultants, was the highest ranked team out of nine teams that submitted their credentials. Information about the selection process and the contract approved by the Board of County Commissioners on April 21, 2015 are available here:

<http://www.miamidade.gov/govaction/matter.asp?matter=150530&file=true&yearFolder=Y2015>

GABLESTAGE - BECOMING GROVESTAGE, OUR REGIONAL THEATER

Who GableStage is

Q: Who is GableStage?

A: GableStage is an award winning local theater company that currently mounts a season of six productions annually and celebrates Miami's theatrical talent by hiring local actors and theater professionals; in its new incarnation as GroveStage, it will operate and program the new theater. GableStage also has a long-established track record for offering educational and outreach programs and for helping smaller, up and coming theater companies develop their work. The management and operating agreement with GableStage, approved by the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners, is available

here: <http://www.miamidade.gov/govaction/matter.asp?matter=151074&file=false&yearFolder=Y2015>

How GableStage was selected to manage and operate the new theater

Q: How was GableStage selected to manage and operate the theater at the Coconut Grove Playhouse and what makes them qualified?

A: A public process was conducted in 2009 by the Coconut Grove Playhouse, Inc. to identify and select a partner to manage and program the new 300-seat theater proposed for the Playhouse site. As a result of that search, GableStage was chosen to provide professional regional theater, complementary performing arts activities, and theater education programs for the community. The process was outlined to the Board of County Commissioners as part of a recommended course of action for the reconstruction, management and operation of the Playhouse, which the BCC approved in 2011. <http://www.miamidade.gov/govaction/matter.asp?matter=102656&file=true&yearFolder=Y2010>

<http://www.miamidade.gov/govaction/matter.asp?matter=102656&file=true&yearFolder=Y2010>

Subsequent related items approved by the BCC include:

- 10.01.2013 - Lease agreement with the State (GableStage is clearly identified as the operator for the theater in the Business Plan that is a part of the Lease) <http://www.miamidade.gov/govaction/legistarfiles/MinMatters/Y2013/131977min.pdf>
- 02.20.2015 - Public hearing sponsored by Commissioner Xavier Suarez regarding the proposed operating agreement in favor of GableStage for the Coconut Grove Playhouse <http://www.miamidade.gov/govaction/matter.asp?matter=150397&file=false&yearFolder=Y2015>
- 04.21.2015 - Operating and Management Agreement between Miami-Dade County and GableStage Inc. <http://www.miamidade.gov/govaction/matter.asp?matter=151074&file=false&yearFolder=Y2015>

GableStage's financial viability

Q: What is GableStage's financial viability and where can we see their current operating budget?

A: GableStage is a financially responsible non-profit organization that not only continues to mount critically-acclaimed and award-winning seasons of theater but also balances its budget annually with a combination of earned revenues, contributed income, and public and private grants, through which it maintains a positive fund balance. For its most recently completed fiscal year (FY 2016-2017), GableStage balanced its budget with 39% from earned revenue (e.g., ticket sales and subscriptions), 39% from contributions (e.g., private donations and special events) and 22% from grants (e.g., state, county and municipal government support, private foundations). As a non-profit organization, GableStage files annual reports as part of the State's requirements for such organizations. These documents are available online.

GableStage's rent payments to the Biltmore

Q: Does GableStage pay rent at their current location at the Biltmore Hotel?

A: GableStage has been paying monthly rent conscientiously to the Biltmore since its inception there in 2004. This link is to [a letter from the Biltmore Hotel](#) attesting to this relationship.

A sustainable business plan and updates in progress

Q: Is the business plan sustainable? Is it being updated?

A: The business plan approved with the lease includes the preliminary pro-forma for the operation of the theater. GableStage is working in consultation with AMS Planning and Research, a nationally respected arts management firm, to update the operating pro forma for GableStage's operation of the Playhouse. GableStage is conducting this work carefully and thoroughly and using the recently completed design development phase architectural drawings as a basis to calculate the facility-related costs (e.g., utilities, security, maintenance, etc.). The process of forecasting increasingly more accurate budgets for the operation of the new theater is an ongoing and evolving one throughout its planning and development, taking into account a number of interconnected elements and actions:

- continuously refining operating forecasts and assumptions based on updated architectural and engineering drawings;
- consultative work with the organization's board and staff regarding programming, staffing and budgeting; and
- examining and extrapolating from the expenditures and revenues of comparable facilities.

This process will continue in earnest until the construction of the theater is completed and opened (the goal for which is in time for the 2020-2021 theater season, but no later than the 2022 deadline in the lease with the State), at which point actual expenditures and revenues will be tracked against the latest forecast; any adjustments necessary will be made based on monthly actuals.

Joe Adler and beyond

Q: Is GableStage made up of only Joe Adler? What happens to the company when he retires?

A: The organization currently has a 10-person professional staff and a 13-member volunteer Board of Directors. GableStage and its board is working with AMS Planning and Research on a succession plan that will include hiring additional staff in anticipation of the company's move to the Coconut Grove Playhouse.

The success of the new theater

Q: What happens if GableStage is wildly successful and outgrows the 300-seat theater?

A: In response to sold-out shows, GableStage would add additional show dates and times as it has done in the past.

The type of theater done by GableStage

Q: Does GableStage produce controversial plays?

A: The mission of GableStage is to provide the South Florida community with classical, contemporary and new theatrical productions of artistic excellence. Like the best regional theaters in America, they challenge their multicultural audiences with innovative productions that entertain as well as examine today's issues and ideas. By emphasizing nontraditional casting and employing the best of our local creative force, GableStage commits itself to meeting the needs of our diverse community. Additionally, GableStage mentors and advances local actors, directors, designers and technicians by providing them with opportunities to achieve artistic acclaim in this region. GableStage's work has ranged from producing "Choir Boys," the first Miami production of the work of Academy Award-winning playwright Tarell Alvin McCraney to Shakespeare's "The Tempest," being produced this season with FIU as its educational touring program to 25 high schools. The excellence of these productions has been recognized in consistently excellent critical reviews and by the company's receiving 60 Carbonell awards for its outstanding work.

GroveStage

Q: Will the name GableStage change once they are no longer based in Coral Gables?

A: In preparation of their move to the Coconut Grove Playhouse site, GableStage has begun the transition to GroveStage. You can also receive regular project updates from GableStage on social media at:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/GroveStage

Twitter: www.twitter.com/GroveStage

Instagram: @GroveStage

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC99hvJMSqG_esDikbQEEMvQ/featured

Education and FIU

Q: What educational benefits will the GableStage and FIU relationship provide to the community?

A: The GableStage/FIU relationship has already begun to produce collaborations between the two entities via joint theatrical productions. This season, GableStage is collaborating with FIU on a production of Shakespeare's "The Tempest" that will reach thousands of high school students. Given the opportunities that will be available for students, faculty and staff in the new theater, FIU also has committed to developing South Florida's first Masters of Fine Arts in Theater degree.

GableStage believes the future of theater can be assured only by the development of young audiences. They currently have an in-house mainstage and in-school touring educational program as major components of their organization. These programs will be continued and expanded at the Coconut Grove Playhouse. GableStage also nurtures other cultural organizations by making its theater space available for use to other cultural and community groups.

Other activities at the new Playhouse

Q: Is anything else planned for the theater or will it be used only by GableStage?

A: The facility will be a hub for K-12 educational programs for theater, and will be instrumental in supporting the collaboration between GableStage and FIU as the University develops the first and only Masters of Fine Arts degree program in theater in South Florida. In addition, spaces will be made available for other events such as dance, music, educational programs, film, etc. when not in use by GableStage or FIU.

Regional theater

Q: What is a regional theater and how will having a regional theater at the Coconut Grove Playhouse benefit the Miami theater community?

A: Regional theaters are professional theaters that cultivate the work of local actors and technical staff and produce their own shows. As the ancestral home of theater in Miami, the new state-of-the-art Coconut Grove Playhouse theater will be the hub for developing and retaining theater talent within our community. In addition, regional theaters have deep commitments to educational programs that introduce kids to the wonders of live theater. The affiliation with FIU will extend this commitment to a whole new level, enabling students, faculty and the university community to collaborate with a professional theater at its highest level. This model is exemplified by such national examples as Yale University and the Yale Repertory Theater and Brown University and the Trinity Repertory Company.

Kevin Spacey

Q: Why did the County reject Kevin Spacey's offer to run the Coconut Grove Playhouse?

A: Mr. Spacey never offered to run the Playhouse. The County has a clear plan to bring great theater to the Coconut Grove Playhouse and welcomes any honest and reputable assistance in advancing the plan as outlined in the property lease agreement.

FUNDING: FACTS AND TRUTHS

Secured funding for the project

Q: What funding is available for the project?

A: The Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners has approved \$5 million from Convention Development Tax (CDT) bond proceeds and \$15 million from the Building Better Communities General Obligation Bond (BBC-GOB) for the project. These funding sources have been reviewed by the Office of the County Attorney and have been determined as eligible for the project as designed.

R#919-04 GOB

http://www.miamidadearts.org/sites/default/files/files/inline/question8-r-919-04-cultural_library_multicultural_fac.pdf

R-1408-00 \$5M CDT

http://www.miamidadearts.org/sites/default/files/files/inline/r-1408-00_5m_cdt_funding.pdf

The uses of County funding

Q: Is the County funding restricted to the restoration of the existing building?

A: Funding for the project can be used for the various options explored by the project's design team in developing a solution that respects the history of the site and helps ensure the viability of the theater. The specific language related to the use of the funds in the Convention Development Tax (CDT) bond and the Building Better Communities General Obligation Bond (BBC-GOB) documents states:

- CDT funding: "repair of the historic structure; repair and expansion of the historic structure; or demolition and reconstruction."

- BBC-GOB funding: "GOB funds would complement other funding to reconstruct the Coconut Grove Playhouse to restore its structural integrity and add to its performance and educational capabilities."

No County funds to build or operate the garage

Q: Are voter-approved County funds being used for the construction of a garage?

A: No County funds will be used to build or operate the proposed garage. The \$20 million in County funds allocated for the Coconut Grove Playhouse will be used for the theater.

Use of funds from the garage development

Q: Why are funds from the garage development proposed for the renovation of the Coconut Grove Playhouse?

A: Funding from the development of the garage and other related development (i.e. retail, office, residential, etc.) will augment secured capital funding for the construction of the theater as outlined in the approved lease with the State of Florida. These funds will help complete the project to the high standards being set for the restoration and new construction work.

The fee to Arquitectonica and its design team

Q: How much is Arquitectonica is being paid to work on this project and is the amount justifiable?

A: It is typical on a complex project such as this one to have the cost of architectural and engineering services for design be between 10-12% of the overall capital costs. The contract between the County and Arquitectonica includes not only design but also construction administration by the design team (i.e., oversight of the project during construction). The total contract amount is reasonable for the breadth of services to be rendered over the entire length of the project. The amount of the professional services agreement with the team led by Arquitectonica, advertised in the solicitation documents and approved by the County Commission, is \$2.4 million, and it includes basic services, contingency and reimbursable expenses for the entire architectural and engineering team. This covers all of the following specialty firms and sub-consultants that are a part of this team and required for this job:

- Architecture
- Historic Preservation Architecture and Specialists
- Mechanical, Electrical, Plumbing, and Fire Protection Engineering
- Structural Engineering
- Civil Engineering and Traffic

- Landscape Architecture
- Theater Design and Systems
- Acoustical, Sound and Communications Design and Systems
- Cost Estimating
- Scheduling
- Building Envelope
- Signage and Wayfinding
- Security
- LEED/Sustainability

The total fee covers these services from the conceptual design through the completion of construction, a process that is scheduled to last approximately 5-6 years.

Encumbrances resolved on the property's title

Q: How were the encumbrances on the property title resolved within the 90 days required in the lease agreement?

A: The largest encumbrance was attributable to accumulated fines levied by the City of Miami for building code violations (e.g., graffiti; broken windows and doors; etc.) while the property was closed and still under the control of the former operator, the non-profit Coconut Grove Playhouse, Inc. In return for the City's agreeing to waive these fines, an agreement between the County and the City allowed the Miami Parking Authority to operate the surface parking at the Playhouse and to have the opportunity for future joint development of a garage on the property. The County resolved other, smaller liens on the title of the property by agreeing to pay the lien holders a small percentage of the debts that they had from doing business with the former Coconut Grove Playhouse non-profit. Funds to resolve these title encumbrances were from parking revenues of the Playhouse's surface parking lot and not from County tax dollars. See link to a BCC agenda item accounts for the County's resolution of these liens on the title [here](#). Recently, the County, in cooperation with the State of Florida and with the assistance of the County's title insurance company, resolved another title issue. A link to the forthcoming BCC agenda item will be added to this "Answer" when it has been finalized.

\$500,000 grant applied for from the State Division of Historical Resources

Q: Will there be an impact to the project as a result of not securing a \$500,000 grant this year from the State of Florida Division of Historical Resources?

A: Miami-Dade County submitted a request for \$500,000 to the competitive capital grant program of the State of Florida Division of Historical Resources. These funds were requested to help with the work necessary to stabilize and restore the historic front building to its 1927 splendor. The Division of Historical Resources ruled that the grant request was technically "ineligible." Miami-Dade County strongly disagrees with this

ruling and has submitted a letter attesting to the project's conformance with the State's grant guidelines and its development as a model of historic preservation practices. Our response to the State can be accessed [here](#). While these additional funds would have been helpful, the project is still on track with the secured \$20 million in County funding in place.

The City of Miami's recently approved bond program

Q: Does the City of Miami's recently approved bond issue have an additional \$10 million "grant" for the Coconut Grove Playhouse project?

A: In initial materials developed by the City of Miami to suggest how the \$400 million in bond funds would be used, there is a \$10 million line item for "Cultural and Historic Facilities" which does not provide any details regarding specific projects. There has been speculation and commentary about a number of possible uses, including for the Playhouse, for Gusman Center for the Performing Arts, etc.

THE DESIGN WORKS

Real progress on the Playhouse project

Q: What real progress has been made on the project since the property was leased to the County and FIU?

A: A substantial amount of progress has occurred on the project. Upon satisfying the encumbrances on the title and having the lease become effective, the County has focused on the planning and design work which to date includes:

- The completion of a competitive selection process for selecting the architectural, engineering, and specialty consultant team which includes: Arquitectonica, Jorge Hernandez Architect, Fisher Dachs and Associates, Kimley-Horn, Douglas Wood, Fraga Engineering, Arquitectonica GEO, Talaske, The Spinnaker Group, Venue Cost Consulting, etc.;
- Conducting various testing procedures such as:
 - Surveying
 - Asbestos testing
 - Structural testing
 - Paint samples and analysis;
- Comprehensive historical research and analysis;
- Completing the Master Plan phase of design which developed the overall strategy for respecting the historic nature of the property and creating a state-of-the art 300-seat theater;

- Holding a town meeting on December 8, 2016 to update the public on results of the Master Plan phase;
- Applying for and successfully acquiring a Certificate of Appropriateness for the Master Plan from the City of Miami's Historic and Environmental Preservation Board on April 4, 2017 (resolution HEPB R-17-023);
- Completing the Conceptual Design phase of the architectural and engineering work;
- Completing the Design Development phase of the architectural and engineering work;
- Submitting a package of design drawings to the City of Miami for initial review and scheduling of required regulatory review boards;
- Holding a second town meeting on October 18, 2017 to update the public on results of the design development phase.

The latest drawings

Q: Where can I see the latest drawings for the project?

A: This [link](#) will take you to the latest drawings for the project (November 2017).

Theater is the main focus of the project

Q: Is theater really the focus of the project?

A: Theater is the main focus of the project for the following reasons:

- A new 300-seat state-of-the-art theater is being designed specifically to accommodate the needs of a producing, regional theater;
- The project calls for the funding from the operations of the garage, retail and residential components to be dedicated to support the theater operations; and
- Creating a hub for theater and ensuring its viability through a dedicated source of revenue honors the past history of the site and helps ensure the long-term success of the theater.

Benefits to the residential neighborhood and West Grove

Q: How will the project benefit the adjacent residential neighborhood and the West Grove?

A: The project has been designed specifically to be a good neighbor to and cultural asset for the adjacent residential neighborhood. It offers the following features:

- A pedestrian promenade provides direct connectivity between the residential neighborhood to Main Highway;

- Landscaping and a pocket park serve and add to the residential neighborhood;
- The theater's low-profile, single-story structures are on the residential side of the project; and
- The service entrance to the theater on Charles Street has a gate and service vehicles will enter a long driveway with deliveries to occur deep inside of the site.

Tarell Alvin McCraney, a Miamian and Academy Award-winning playwright (as well as winner of the MacArthur "Genius," Whiting, Steinberg, and PEN/Laura Pels awards) offered the following observations about the project and the West Grove:

"My grandmother born right on Charles Avenue in Coconut Grove, who loves Theatre, and can recite Shakespeare has never once been in the Coconut Grove Playhouse. It's been in her neighborhood since 1927. Let's change that.

We have a chance to make history by supporting GableStage and the current plan for the reopening of the playhouse. We now have a chance to include programming, like the time Mr. Adler invited an audience full of students, day after day, for free, to view the Royal Shakespeare Company perform Antony & Cleopatra set in Haiti starring a Black woman as Cleopatra, a first for the Royal Shakespeare Company, would have never happened without the insistence of GableStage.

Because of Mr. Adler, thousands of Miami-Dade Students will know a Latino man can portray Hamlet, a Black women can portray a queen, and that an African American kid from where they come from can to go to Yale and be considered a genius and win an Academy Award. Mr. Adler is and has been committed to celebrating local artists and their talents and to introducing the artists and patrons of tomorrow to the world.

But he, and we can, do one more thing...

With your support of this current plan, we can see a 90-year-old Miami woman, who loves Shakespeare, get a chance to enjoy the theater on the same street where she was born and raised. We are so close. Let's not wait another moment."

This is the link to the [entire statement by Tarell Alvin McCraney](#).

The existing Playhouse auditorium chamber and a state-of-the-art theater

Q: Could you fit a state-of-the-art theater into the existing auditorium chamber of the Playhouse?

A: The design team tested the possibility of fitting the 300-seat theater into the existing auditorium shell and determined the following:

- The existing auditorium does not have dimensions required for a state-of-the art, working theater - specifically, the ceiling height is too low to accommodate catwalks, lighting positions and theatrical equipment;
- The remaining historic elements (e.g. the proscenium arch, solomonic columns, fountains, decorative grates and cornice) would be more difficult to incorporate in place - as opposed to the current design which saves and spotlights their re-use;
- The historic features of the existing auditorium, including the very shape of the 1927 movie theater space, have been largely eliminated by successive architectural adaptations - and placing a new 300-seat theater into this compromised space would not have the effect of restoring the space to its original state; and
- Attempting to fit the 300-seat theater into the existing auditorium chamber would require even more, intrusive and costly alterations with the hope of, at best, achieving a significantly compromised facility for theater that might not be able to meet code or ensure a state-of-the-art working theater.

The garage

Q: Why is the size of the garage being proposed and might there be less need for parking in the near future?

A: The proposed garage is intended to benefit not only theater patrons but the residents, visitors, and local community. The height of the currently proposed garage has been lowered from the originally proposed structure which had been designed to the maximum height allowed by zoning codes. The current garage is planned to have 421 spaces on 5 levels reaching a height of approximately 65' out of the maximum allowed height of 81.' This would be the only public parking garage in Coconut Grove operated for the benefit of the public.

The modest size of the “commercial” elements for the project

Q: How big are the “commercial” elements for this project?

A: The commercial elements are very modest in size and consist of the following:

- The historic front building’s storefronts will be restored and returned to their original 1927 use as small-scaled retail spaces;
- The historic front building’s second and third floors will be restored and returned to their original 1927 use as offices and/or residential spaces;
- A restaurant/café will be part of the new ground-level construction attached to the garage;
- Approximately 31 studio-styled residential units will be on the front (Main Highway) and back (residential neighborhood) facades of the garage as a way to present a friendly “face” for the garage to both downtown Coconut Grove and the residential neighborhood; and

- The garage has been reduced from its originally proposed height of 81' to 65' and will accommodate 421 cars to serve the theater and this entire end of Coconut Grove.

Responsibility for building and operating the garage and related components

Q: Who will pay for and operate the garage and commercial components of the project and who will benefit from them?

A: The County and the Miami Parking Authority (MPA) are developing an agreement for MPA to seek a developer/operator to build and operate the retail, office, and residential components of project. MPA would operate the garage. The Business Plan that is part of Lease among the County, FIU, and the State stipulates that the net proceeds from the operation of the garage and related development will be used to support the operations of the theater. The premise for this arrangement is to create a source of revenue from the garage operations and retail and residential rentals that will support the theater operation without becoming an additional burden on taxpayers. No County funds will be used to develop and operate these components of the project.

The entrance to the garage

Q: Why is the entrance to the parking garage proposed to be from Main Highway and could it be relocated to the alley?

A: The alley is a one-way access point which would only allow traffic in and out of the garage to move in one direction. Traffic exiting the garage through the alley would have to load onto the residential neighborhood to the west, bringing additional vehicles through the residential narrow streets, which is not acceptable. The proposed design has been carefully conceived to prevent additional traffic in the adjacent residential neighborhood, while providing ample pedestrian access through the site and connectivity for the residential neighborhood to the west. It is important to point out that for the history of the Playhouse, while it was active and to this day, access to the Playhouse surface parking lot has been from Main Highway. As with most cultural venues, traffic control personnel would be utilized on Main Highway during peak times for theater events.

Studio theater versus a proscenium theater

Q: What is the difference between a 'black box' or studio theater and a proscenium theater?

A: A black box theater is a flexible theater usually without character or embellishment—a space that is designed literally as an adaptable, four-walled box. Usually, audience seating is provided on moveable risers set up on the theater's flat floor. In a black box theater, the location of the stage and the seating configurations are flexible and vary

according to the needs of the production. It typically has a grid above the space to allow for flexibility in hanging curtains to configure the room and/or lights for the show or event. In a proscenium theater, the stage is permanently located at one end of the auditorium and is physically separated from the audience space by a proscenium wall. The opening between the auditorium and stage is called the proscenium frame, proscenium opening, proscenium arch, or simply the proscenium. The auditorium and stage occupy two separate "boxes" or rooms. The stage box (stage house) provides fly space above the stage and wings on either side of the stage and permits a wide variety of scenic, lighting and cast movement effects. The auditorium box is the audience chamber and it typically contains catwalk spaces above to provide lighting positions onto the stage.

NEXT STEPS: RETURNING GREAT THEATER TO THE GROVE

Project completion

Q: When is the Miami-Dade County/FIU/GableStage project scheduled to be completed?

A: The business plan (or land use plan) that is part of the lease approved by the State of Florida Cabinet, the FIU Board of Trustees and the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners stipulates that the project shall be finished by 2022; however, the County anticipates completing the project earlier for the FY2020-21 theater season.

Hurdles ahead

Q: What hurdles are ahead for the project?

A: While many obstacles have been cleared to allow significant progress, many steps remain, including but not limited to the following:

- Prevailing in the appeal by two citizens of the Historic and Environmental Preservation Board's approval of the project's Certificate of Appropriateness - the City of Miami Commission is scheduled to hear the appeal on December 14, 2017, 2:00 pm;
- Finalizing a Memorandum of Understanding with MPA regarding the terms of our partnership in developing the garage and related development;
- Obtaining State approval for the development of the garage and related development;
- Identifying a satisfactory developer/operator for the garage, residential and retail components;
- Regulatory reviews from various City of Miami review boards, including obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness from the Historic and Environmental Preservation Board; and
- Successfully completing a competitive bid process to identify a capable contractor with experience building complex projects.

How to stay in touch with progress

Q: How can I stay in touch with progress on the project?

A: [Sign up here](#) for e-progress reports provided by the Department of Cultural Affairs or go to the Department's web site at <http://miamidadearts.org/coconut-grove-playhouse-updates> where all prior progress reports can be seen. You can also receive regular project updates from GableStage on social media at:

Facebook: www.facebook.com/GroveStage

Twitter: www.twitter.com/GroveStage

Instagram: @GroveStage

YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC99hvJMSqG_esDikbQEEMvQ/featured

These are the authoritative sources for facts, information and progress updates about the project and the ongoing work of the professional teams engaged in the return of great theater to the Grove and the Coconut Grove Playhouse.

The Facebook page "Save The Coconut Grove Playhouse" is not associated with the Miami-Dade County/FIU/Gablestage project in any way.