

**MINUTES OF THE  
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY CULTURAL AFFAIRS COUNCIL  
November 15, 2023**

A meeting of the Miami-Dade County Cultural Affairs Council was held at the Miami-Dade County Auditorium and online via Zoom.

<p><b><u>Members Present</u></b>          Kareem Brantley          Sandra Curbelo          Commissioner Daniela Jean          Councilwoman Linda Julien          Cheryl Rees          Janá Sigars-Malina, First Vice Chair          Zaba St. George Castro          Monty Trainer</p>	<p><b><u>Members Not Present</u></b>          Mitchell Bierman          Al Dotson, Jr.          Adolfo Henriques, Immediate Past Chair          Brian May, Chairman          Jorge Plasencia          Rosa Sugrañes</p>
<p><b><u>Staff</u></b>          Marialaura Leslie, Director          Ashlee Thomas, Deputy Director          Francine Andersen          Stephanie Antequera          Kelly Allocco          Stephanie Antequera          Patricia Arbelaez          Stefania Barigelli          Nikenna Benjamin          Eddy Calero          Tania Centeno          Nicole Chaplin          Kimberly Chuck          Mary-Margaret Dale          Marie Denis          Bianca Gonzalez          Olga Gonzalez          Teddy Harrell          Liliana Hernandez-Constenla          LaToya Hightower</p>	<p><b><u>Staff (continued)</u></b>          Regla Lee          Valentine Medina          Dorixis McComas          Gilda Mooney          Steven Padilla          Alex Peraza          Adriana Perez          Dana Pezoldt          Pablo Rincon          Katherine Revell          Patricia Romeu          Raul Rueda          Helen Sanchez          Amanda Sanfilippo          Javier Siut          Christina Tassy          Geraldine Toussaint          Pamela Valles          Eduardo Vivas          Graham Winick</p>

Cultural Affairs Council First Vice Chair, Janá Sigars-Malina, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. and welcomed the Cultural Affairs Council. She welcomed staff and Council members that joined the meeting via Zoom.

Director Marialaura Leslie recognized Cultural Affairs Council members and Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs staff that have joined the meeting via Zoom. She announced that Chairman May is not available and First Vice Chair Janá Sigars-Malina is running the meeting on his behalf.

## **ITEMS FOR APPROVAL**

### **Approval of October 18, 2023 Minutes**

The minutes of the October 18, 2023 Cultural Affairs Council meeting were presented. They were approved unanimously. (Motion by Ms. St. George Castro; seconded by Councilwoman Julien)

### **Requests for Excused Absences for November 15, 2023**

A request for an excused absence was submitted by Councilor Bierman, Councilor Dotson, Jr., Councilor Henriques, Chairman May, Councilor Plasencia, and Councilor Sugrañes. (Motion by Mr. Brantley; seconded by Ms. St. George Castro)

### **FY 2023-2024 Community Grants (CG) Program Panel Recommendations – Second Quarter**

Ms. Leslie reported the FY 2023-2024 Community Grants Program – Second Quarter panel, co-chaired by Cultural Affairs Councilors Janá Sigars-Malina and Sandra Curbelo, convened on November 2, 2023, to review 32 applications requesting \$270,000.00 for the Second Quarter of the program. The Panel recommended funding 32 applicants for a total of \$200,000.00. The projects recommended for funding represent a diversified range of activities and demographic locations. In its deliberations, the Panel carefully considered and applied the Community Grants guidelines as outlined below. The Community Grants Program is responsive on a quarterly basis to organizations, which develop small and large-scale community-based programs, projects, events, and publications. The program is particularly sensitive to the needs of 1) indigenous cultural neighborhood activities and projects encouraging the preservation of heritage, traditions, and culture; and 2) social service organizations and cultural groups developing collaborative intervention projects.

The following Councilors declared conflicts of interest and abstained from voting on the associated organizations:

Janá Sigars-Malina - Florida International University (FIU) Board of Trustees for the benefit of the Miami Urban Studios

A motion was made to fund all the of the Panel's recommendations subject to Councilors with conflicts abstaining from voting on the applications affected. The Councilors with the above-mentioned conflicts of interest abstained from the voting. They were approved unanimously. (Motion by Mr. Brantley; seconded by Ms. St. George Castro)

Brazilian Voices, Inc.	\$5,634
Brevo Theatre, Inc.	\$5,634
Center for the Advancement of Jewish Education, Inc.	\$11,268

Codeart, Inc.	\$5,634
Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Parade and Festivities Committee, Inc.	\$11,268
Encantus Music, Inc.	\$5,634
Giants in the City, Inc.	\$5,634
Global Arts Project, Inc.	\$5,634
Greater Miami Community Concert Band, Inc. dba Greater Miami Symphonic Band	\$5,634
Imago Por Las Artes, Inc.	\$5,634
Italian Film Festival, Inc.	\$5,634
Maiaca, Inc.	\$5,634
Miami Beach Arts Trust, Inc.	\$5,634
Miami Center for Architecture & Design, Inc.	\$5,634
Miami Dance Futures, Inc.	\$5,634
Miami International Ballet Competition, Inc.	\$5,634
Power Access, Inc.	\$11,268
Power2Voice, Corp.	\$5,634
Rotary Foundation of South Miami, Inc.	\$7,512
Ruta Teatral, Inc. a/f/a Mujeres Trending Corp.	\$5,634
Shakevia's Sickle Cell Anemia Foundation, Inc.	\$2,810
Sol E Lua Cultural Arts Center, Inc.	\$5,634
St. Patrick's Day Committee, Inc.	\$7,512
The Bridge Miami - Music & the Arts Incubator, Inc.	\$5,634
The Last Hundred, Inc.	\$5,634
Tropic Bound, Inc.	\$5,634
True Mirage, Inc.	\$5,634
United Jewish Generations, Inc.	\$5,634
University of Miami - Frost School of Music	\$5,634
Village of Pinecrest	\$7,512
We Art Foundation, Inc.	\$5,634

The Panel's recommendations to fund the following organizations, for which there are the above-mentioned conflicts of interest and abstentions from voting, were voted on and passed unanimously as follows:

Florida International University Board of Trustees, for the Benefit of the Miami Beach Urban Studios	\$5,634
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(Motion by Mr. Brantley; seconded by Ms. St. George Castro)

**FY 2023-2024 Miami Individual Artists (MIA) Program Panel**

Ms. Leslie presented the grant panel for the FY 2023-2024 Miami Individual Artists (MIA) Grants Program. She noted that the volunteer panels are diverse and balanced in terms of expertise,

ethnicity, geography, and gender representation. The Miami Individual Artists (MIA) Grants Program panel was approved unanimously. (Motion by Ms. Rees; seconded by Ms. Curbelo)

Councilor Monty Trainer joined the meeting at 10:08 am.

## **REPORTS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Department Facilities Update – Dennis C. Moss Cultural Arts Center**

Mr. Eric Fliss provided an update on the Dennis C. Moss Cultural Arts Center's season highlights, noting the Center had 47 event days of activity, 9 dance studio recitals, 14 graduations, over \$46,000 in concession purchases and a total of 15,764 guests visiting during the May to June when the building is turned over to the community for activations. During the July through September timeframe, the Center had much success with the Classic Albums Live presentations. Mr. Fliss noted that show attendance has steadily increased as audiences are coming back after the COVID-19 pandemic shutdown, as evidenced by the sold-out Siempre Flamenco and Sarasota Contemporary Dance shows. The 9th annual Backyard Bash kicked off the season featuring Caribbean music by The Wailers and Kobo Town. Upcoming shows include Dance Theatre of Harlem in January 2024 and DrumLine Live, is a Broadway touring production highlighting the music and marching bands of Historic Black Colleges. In February 2024 The Moss Center is presenting Samara Joy, voted Grammy Best New Artist 2023 and Best Jazz Album. The Center is partnering with the Adrienne Arsht Center and Culture Shock Miami on educational programming for kids and youth throughout Miami-Dade County.

### **Art in Public Places Update**

Ms. Amanda Sanfilippo presented the Art in Public Places update. She presented the public artworks that can be seen at PortMiami Terminal F – Carnival Cruise Line, including a twelve-panel monumental painting by Mette Tommerup. Internationally renowned artist Aaron Curry is well-known across the world for his abstract and modernist works, and his work at the terminal features large scale paintings inspired by the experience of standing on a ship and looking at the sky. The work by Miami-based artists Robert Chambers features cloud-like forms. Ms. Sanfilippo also presented works by Juana Valdez, *The Deepest Blue*, 2023, a large-scale made of ceramic tile that reflects the Caribbean basin, and finally the reconfiguration of artwork by Lydia Rubio. There will be a Public Art Reveal and Tour that will be an official Art Basel Miami Beach program on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, from 7 to 8 pm and the Cultural Affairs Council is encouraged to attend.

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

- Ms. Leslie provided an update on the Department of Cultural Affairs' leadership transition. On October 31, 2023, Mayor Daniella Levine Cava officially appointed Ms. Leslie as the permanent Director, in concurrence with the Council. The Mayor officially introduced Ms. Leslie to the Miami-Dade Board of County Commissioners at their meeting on Tuesday, November 7, 2023, and she thanked Councilors who were in attendance, Chairman Brian May, Councilor Janá Sigars-Malina, and Councilor Mitch Bierman for attending. She noted it is the honor of a lifetime and thanked the Council for its support.

- Ms. Leslie introduced the Department of Cultural Affairs' new Deputy Director Ashlee Thomas. Ashlee is a former member of the Department, having worked at the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center. She trained in theater and dance and is also an alumna of the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center. Ashlee has worked at the Adrienne Arsht Center as Manager of Education and Community Engagement and other non-profit cultural organizations. Most recently, she served as President of Miami Urban Contemporary Experience (MUCE). A graduate of the New World School of the Arts, she holds a Bachelor of Science from Florida State University in Business Marketing, a Master in Public Administration from Florida International University and a Masters in Fine Arts from New York University in Musical Theater Writing. Ms. Thomas thanked the Council for their support and expressed her excitement about the opportunity to serve the Department of Cultural Affairs and the cultural community in this new capacity.
- Ms. Leslie reported that she and Department staff, including Chief of Administration, Graham Winick, and Cultural Projects Administrator, Christina Tassy, along with Cultural Affairs Council Chairman Brian May, are currently meeting with each of Miami-Dade County Commissioners to introduce the new team and speak with them and their staff about the importance of the arts and the work of the Council. Now that Ms. Thomas is on board she will also be attending the meetings.
- Ms. Leslie reported that the 2023-2024 Golden Ticket Arts Guide for Miami-Dade County older adults is now available. The Department increased the number of guides printed, with 25,000 guides available this year, including 90 participating partner cultural organizations and 250 event offers overall. The bilingual guide is printed in English and Spanish and is also available online. The Department has mailed over ten thousand guides directly to constituents' homes, and they are also being directly distributed via Miami-Dade County Mayor's Office, Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners' District Offices, Miami-Dade Library System branches, Miami-Dade Parks and Miami-Dade County Transit offices. Ms. Leslie commended Lili Hernandez, Marketing and Public Affairs Officer and Gisella Rivas-Diaz, Cultural Programs Manager for their work on the program.
- Ms. Leslie noted that the Knight Foundation announced the retirement of President Alberto Ibarguen, who did remarkable work leading the Foundation. Their new President and CEO is Maribel Perez Wadsworth, a professional in media and former publisher of USA Today.
- Give Miami Day is Thursday, November 16, 2023. The event is organized by the Miami Foundation annually for the benefit of the nonprofit community. Ms. Leslie encouraged the Council to continue to support the arts and cultural organizations through the program.
- Ms. Leslie reported that the Department of Cultural Affairs will likely be announcing a groundbreaking event for the much-awaited renovation of the Joseph Caleb Auditorium. The capital team led by Capital Projects Chief Marie Denis will be launching the project. The date will be announced soon.
- Ms. Leslie reminded the Council that the Arts and Economic Prosperity (Economic Impact - AEP6) study's results are available. Every 5 years Miami-Dade County participates in a national economic impact survey and for the last 18-months surveyed Miami-Dade

audiences about their spending related to attending cultural events and as well as nonprofit cultural groups about their organizational budgets and spending power. Cultural Affairs staff member Kelly Allocco led a team to collect the data from cultural organizations, including Department-managed cultural facilities. The results of the study show that Miami-Dade County has an annual economic impact of \$2.1 Billion dollars and ranks Miami-Dade County as #1 in the country. Ms. Leslie added that the arts also support 32,000 jobs and the arts attracts 19 million visitors to the destination. The Department announced the news and is rolling out a campaign to promote and share the accomplishments. The development of a video is part of this campaign and once it is ready it will be presented to the Mayor and Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners.

- Ms. Leslie reported that the Department was awarded two major grants from The Jorge M. Pérez Family Foundation at The Miami Foundation totaling \$300,000. The first award was the Pérez CreARTE 2023 Grant for the African Heritage Cultural Arts Center for youth arts education programs for \$100,000. The second was the Pérez CreARTE 2023 Grant for the Miami-Dade County Auditorium programming for \$200,000. Ms. Leslie congratulated the teams and both cultural centers, Marshall Davis, Teddy Harrell, and Isis Roberts at African Heritage Cultural Arts Center, as well as Patricia Arbelaez and Javier Siut at the Miami-Dade County Auditorium.
- Ms. Leslie thanked the Department staff, now 100-strong across all divisions and facilities. We have an outstanding team of leaders and want to thank them all for their hard work every day and their dedication to the work of the Department. She recognized the Miami-Dade County Auditorium for hosting the Cultural Affairs Council meeting as well as Chief of Administration, Graham Winick for being the “executive producer” in coordinating the meeting.

## **COUNCILOR REPORTS**

- Ms. Sigars-Malina reported that she was very proud to have been present at Director Leslie’s appointment. She noted she has known her for a long time, since she served on the Board of the Miami City Ballet. She was excited to see all the Department staff come out in support of the new Director.
- Mr. Trainer reported that plans are underway for the Dade Days which is being planned for February 7, 2024 and the Coconut Grove Arts Festival kicking off on February 17, 2024.
- Ms. St. George Castro reported her daughter’s dance troupe will be participating in the Thanksgiving Day Parade 2024.
- Ms. Curbelo reported that District 10 celebrated the Christmas Tree lighting at Tropical Park with Board of County Commission Vice Chair, Commissioner Anthony Rodriguez. She reminded the Council that the Westchester Cultural Arts Center has a lot of great holiday programs on the schedule, including jazz in the patio.
- Mr. Brantley welcomed new Deputy Director Ashlee Thomas. He also commended the Cultural Affairs Council for maintaining momentum with the work in support of the arts. He always feels motivated and energized when he serves on a grant panel and attends a Council meeting and sees all the things that are being accomplished.
- Ms. Rees congratulated Director Leslie on her appointment and welcomed new Deputy Director Ashlee Thomas.

- Councilwoman Julien reported that she was joining via Zoom from Atlanta where she is attending the National League of Cities Conference. She reported that Miami Gardens has started the process to bring a cultural center to the community as the arts bring people together and it's also an economic engine. She will provide details to the Council as issues are finalized. She congratulated Director Leslie on her appointment and welcomed new Deputy Director Ashlee Thomas. Ms. Julien also noted that she is happy to see the new Golden Ticket Arts Guide is out and is available as the program is very popular with the Miami Gardens older adult community.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Lilibiana Hernandez-Constenla".

Lilibiana Hernandez-Constenla