



# MIAMI BEACH

City of Miami Beach, 1700 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, Florida 33139, www.miamibeachfl.gov

## COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor Philip Levine and Members of the City Commission

FROM: Jimmy L. Morales, City Manager

DATE: May 21, 2014

SUBJECT: REFERRAL TO THE FINANCE AND CITYWIDE PROJECTS COMMISSION COMMITTEE – A DISCUSSION REGARDING WHETHER OR NOT TO PURSUE FOOD AND BEVERAGE CONCESSIONS FOR SOUNDSCAPE PARK, COLLINS PARK, AND THE MIAMI BEACH BOTANICAL GARDEN.

### ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION

Refer discussion to Finance and Citywide Projects Commission Committee as recommended by the Administration.

### BACKGROUND

Over the past few years the City has invested millions of dollars to create and improve Collins Park and SoundScape Park. The City and New World Symphony (NWS) successfully partnered to provide programming in SoundScape Park. The programming attracts thousands of people to view NWS Wallcasts™ and the City's SoundScape Cinema Series. The City has also worked with the Bass Museum to provide temporary public art and other sporadic Arts in the Parks Programs in Collins Park. However, there are significant periods of the time when these parks are fairly empty. That is because these parks offer nothing to attract nearby workers, visitors, or residents.

In recent months, the City Administration has been discussing methods to better activate Collins Park and SoundScape Park during the day. Those discussions have included the Collins Park Neighborhood Association and New World Symphony to ensure their interests are preserved. The City is currently working with those entities to provide free yoga in Collins Park several days each week and to provide a consistent schedule of daytime music in SoundScape as just one method to attract more daytime use.

The Miami Beach Botanical Garden is another facility identified as an area that could benefit from more pedestrian activity. Visitors to the Garden frequently seek food and beverage options while in the facility, but currently only have vending machine options.

Concession contractors to provide food and beverage services to the public are another method that has been successfully used in most other cities to activate parks. A single well planned concessionaire can offer the public something to do, something to eat, and an opportunity to sit/relax amongst other people. More importantly, they contribute to safety or the feeling of safety. Well planned concessionaires can complement their surroundings while also adding to the richness of parks and the urban experience.

### **SOUNDSCAPE PARK**

SoundScape Park is located at the SW corner of Washington Avenue and 17<sup>th</sup> Street and is widely considered to be the front door of the New World Center, which is home to New World Symphony. The park was designed with restrooms and a variety of shaded areas for seating, but lacks a fixed concession building. Because the park doesn't have a concession facility the City has initiated discussions with NWS to determine if their exclusive cater, Thierry Catering and Event Design, could provide concession services in SoundScape. NWS and Thierry Catering have expressed interest and are in the process of developing a concept for review and consideration.

### **COLLINS PARK**

Collins Park is located between 21 and 22 street on Collins Avenue and is considered the front door of the Bass Museum of Art. The Park used to also be the site of the Miami Beach Public Library. The library was demolished in 2005 and relocated to a new facility on 22<sup>nd</sup> street bordering Collins Park. The Rotunda, which is the former reading room of the library, was the only portion of the former structure to remain when the park and was renovated. However, the Rotunda renovation focused on the restoration of the exterior reliefs and does not allow the public to use the inside.

Past discussion have centered on activating the Rotunda with arts related ideas, but substantial funding would be required to make the Rotunda suitable for public use and arts activities typically require annual operating subsidies. The Administration would like the City Commission to consider leasing the space to a concessionaire for food and beverage services. If leased, the lessee could be required to fund build-out of the space and the City could provide tenant improvement credit in exchange for their investment. If the City Commission agrees with this concept, the City would need to issue a solicitation (RFP, RFQ, ITN) to secure a commercial real estate broker to assist the City in securing a viable tenant.

### **BOTANICAL GARDEN**


The City, in partnership with the Miami Beach Garden Conservancy, completed a \$1.3 million renovation of the Miami Beach Botanical Garden. The project included demolishing the existing concrete features; removing the existing

fencing and replacing it with monolithic walls; relocating the entrance of the garden; constructing water features and ponds; constructing hardscape paths, plazas and patios; relocating landscaping and plantings; and installing new lighting and irrigation.

Miami Beach Botanical Garden, located at 2000 Convention Center Drive, Miami Beach, is owned by the City of Miami Beach and operated by the Miami Beach Garden Conservancy. The City administration has contacted the Garden Conservancy who is interested in the concept, but expressed a concern with the volume of regular traffic needed to make the concession financially viable. Another consideration is that Art Basel in Miami Beach currently uses the Botanical Garden during their show and they contract with an independent operator for a café and sit down restaurant.

### **CONCLUSION**

The Administration recommends the referral of the discussion regarding whether or not the City should pursue food and beverage concessions for Soundscape Park, Collins Park, and the Miami Beach Botanical Garden to the Finance and Citywide Projects Committee.

  
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