



## "Paseo" Lawsuits Against City "The Eye of the Beholder"

According to Coral Gables City Attorney, Craig



Leen, (Left) there have been two legal actions filed in the 11 Judicial Circuit against the City relative to the project known as *Paseo de la Riviera*. (1350 S. Dixie Hwy.) Three individuals who reside near the proposed *Paseo* project have filed a petition seeking a review of the City Commission's quasi-judicial zoning decisions made on December 8, 2015. Those decisions approved a PAD or Planned Area Development and a mixed use site plan. The petitioners also question the approval of the project as a whole.

The City has filed a Brief indicating that facts have been misstated and the petitioners have failed to properly acknowledge the competent and substantial evidence on which the Commission based its decisions. Further, the City's response states, in part, that the petitioners have neglected to show that the City acted without due process or that the City misinterpreted or applied the wrong areas of the Code. The City asks that the petition be denied. At this time the City is waiting for a decision on this Petition for Writ of Certiorari.

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The second action, initiated by two of the original three petitioners, challenges the legislative Comprehensive Plan Future Land Use Map and Zoning Code changes. These changes allow for mixed-use vertical development at higher densities and intensities. According to the City, the lawsuit, filed on March 3, 2016 should be dismissed and is meritless and a delaying tactic.



As far as can be determined the above referenced phrase first appeared in the 3rd century in Greek. Subsequently, there have been many verified versions of this often used literary comment. In 1878, the current form was found in *Molly Baun*, a book by Molly Hungerford (nee Hamilton.) See *Wikipedia*.

"...ugly presentation of the metal, tubular framework...",  
"...clever."  
"...something out of a horror movie...",  
"...spectacular...",  
"...overlook(ing) the 'thing' ...", "...poetic and beautiful..."

If you did not live in Coral Gables you might think these comments were observations about different things. However, you well know that these are expressions generated by citizens viewing the *Passiflora* sculpture installations at the intersections of Segovia Boulevard, Coral Way and North Greenway.

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Gables Good Government Committee supports issues and causes that preserve and improve the quality of life in Coral Gables and promotes the effective and efficient management of its government.

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## Eye of the Beholder: Continued

As these art pieces have evolved on their sites the emotions of the residents have become more intense and elevated. Petitions have been created and circulated. Emails and phone calls to the City Manager and Commissioners have inundated City Hall. Reports are that most communications are in the negative. Many want the sculptures removed.

In addition to the comments based on esthetics, questions have been raised as to the process by which the decisions to approve these art works was handled. Many residents in the immediate neighborhoods have remarked about the lack of opportunity for citizen's opinions to be heard. However, according to Dona Spain, Historical Resources and Cultural Arts Officer, there is no requirement to entertain public input for projects of this nature.

Clearly, money is one of the major topics of discussion related to this project. The total figure provided by the city Finance Office for the two finished pieces is \$1,075,000. Broken down the funding is as follows: Neighborhood Renaissance Program Bond Funds (NRP), \$1,000,000; National Endowment for the Arts, \$40,000; and Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden, in kind donation, \$35,000.

The following information was provided by Diana Gomez, Coral Gables Director of Finance: "The NRP bond program was a \$22.155 million bond issuance (in 2011) to fund various projects throughout the City. At the time of issuing the NRP

bonds, the City was able to refinance existing debt which allowed savings in annual debt payments enough to cover the new annual debt service payment of the NRP bonds, therefore, not increasing the City's annual costs. Further, Gomez reports that a good estimation of the annual debt for this one project is \$51,300 for twenty years

Selecting the artist and her proposal for civic art at these sites was the effort of the **Segovia Circles Fountain Judging Panel**. Made up of five members, four being residents of Coral Gables, the members of the panel were: **Dr. Carol Damian**, the Director and Chief Curator of the Frost Art Museum at Florida International University, who is also on the Miami-Dade County Public Trust for Art in Public Places; **Nannett Zapata**, Chief Operating Officer and curator of the outdoor sculpture programs at Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden; **Julio Grabiell**, AIA, a prior member of the Miami-Dade County Board for Art in Public Places; **Sylvia Cubina**, Chief Curator and Director of The Bass Museum and **Brian Dursum**, former Director and Chief Curator of the Lowe Art Museum. Additionally, the Coral Gables Historic Preservation Board issued a *Special Certificate of Appropriateness* for the Segovia Plaza location. On November 18, 2014 the City Commission unanimously approved the Judging Panel's selection.



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## The Newest GGG Board Member: Juan Carlos Diaz-Padron

Juan Carlos Diaz Padron is a lifelong resident of Coral Gables and is excited to join the board of the Gables Good Government Committee. From an early age Juan Carlos has been actively engaged in organizations that serve others and improve quality of life. In 2007 he was instrumental in the creation of the City of Coral Gables Youth Advisory Board and served as its chair until graduating from Belen Jesuit preparatory School. Currently, he serves as the chair of the Coral Gables Insurance Advisory Committee.

Diaz-Padron holds a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Florida International University and a Master of Science in Management with a concentration in Risk Management and insurance from Florida State University. He holds the prestigious Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter designation and serves on the Board of Directors for the South Florida CPCU Society.

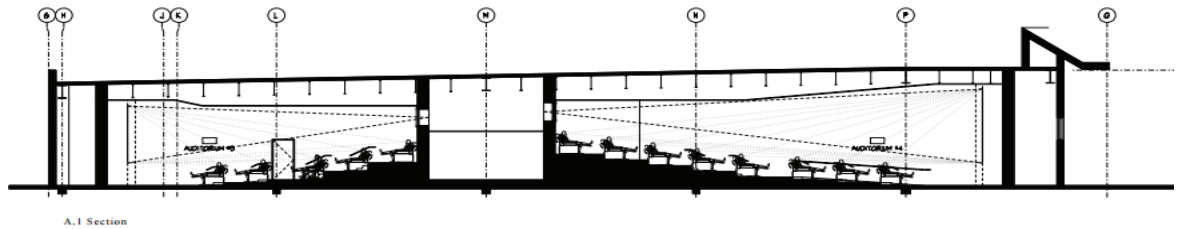
The leadership of GGG is pleased to welcome Juan Carlos to the Board of Directors.

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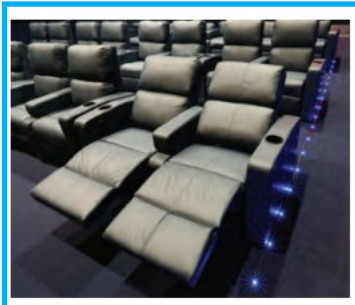
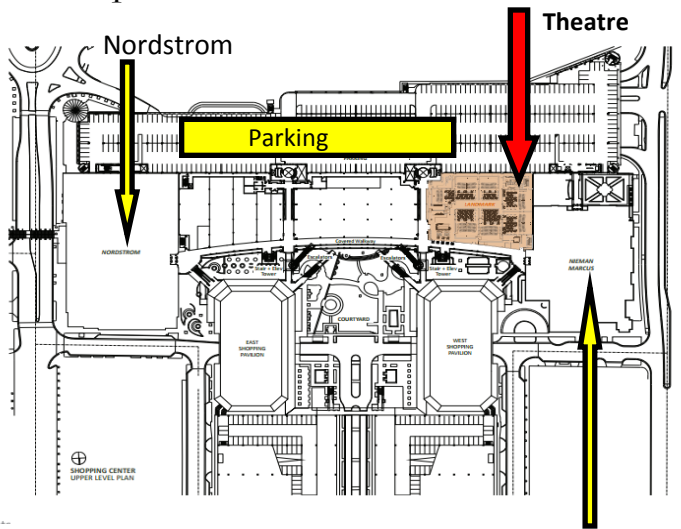
# Multi-screen Theatre Coming to Village of Merrick Park



At Village of  
Merrick Park



Landmark Theatres plans for constructing a multi-screen theatre are shown, in part, from their 2015 submission to the Planning and Zoning Division, Development Review Committee



Looks very comfy!

To view more complete  
plans of the theatre go to:

<http://www.coralgables.com>

Enter: **Landmark Theater** in  
the search window

## "Green" is on the Go!

The city's  
new  
"green  
fleet"  
has  
been  
seen on  
the  
streets  
for a



few weeks now. So how is it going?

George Ruggiano, the Chief Mechanical Officer for the City of Coral Gables had this to say, "I use this electrical vehicle to conduct city business every day. I think it's great. In our field, we always try to find ways to bring electricity down and save power. By using these new vehicles, the City is leading by example and conveying a great message to our citizens about the importance of protecting our environment with 'greener' transportation options."

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