



COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Commission

From: Commissioner David Suarez

Date: March 19, 2025

Subject: REFERRAL TO THE FINANCE AND ECONOMIC RESILIENCY COMMITTEE - DISCUSS POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST AND ETHICAL CONCERNS RELATED TO MIAMI DESIGN PRESERVATION LEAGUE'S MULTIPLE ROLES.

ANALYSIS

Please place on the March 19, 2025 agenda a referral to the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee (the "Committee") to discuss the potential conflict of interest and ethical concerns related to the Miami Design Preservation League's multiple roles. I respectfully request that this item be placed on the agenda of the Committee's March 26, 2025 meeting.

The Miami Design Preservation League ("MDPL") is a City contractor managing the Miami Beach Ocean Front Auditorium ("the 10th Street Auditorium") as a Visitors' Center and Art Deco Museum. This organization is also a recipient of grant funding from the City and engages in fundraising to comply with the terms of the management agreement. Pursuant to the City's Resiliency Code, MDPL also has the right to nominate three individuals for appointment of one of them to a seat on the Historic Preservation Board. MDPL has also been granted special status under the Resiliency Code; specifically, MDPL has standing, when other third parties generally would not, to appeal certain decisions of the City's land use boards. In addition to these interactions and relationships with the City, one or more MDPL representatives frequently appear(s) before the City Commission, various Commission Committees, and the City's land use boards as lobbyists advocating for policies that could affect the City's decisions on matters related to historic preservation and development.

MDPL's overlapping roles as a City contractor and lobbyist, as well as its preferred status under the Resiliency Code, raise important questions about potential conflicts of interest and ethical considerations. The blurring of lines between these various roles could create perceptions of impropriety or undue influence, especially when decisions regarding City contracts and land use matters are being discussed and voted on by the City Commission.

I would like to engage in a conversation with my colleagues on the Committee to assess whether these multiple roles are appropriately managed and whether additional safeguards or clarifications are needed to address any potential conflicts. This discussion will help ensure that the City's processes remain transparent, ethical, and free from conflicts of interest.