

MIAMI BEACH

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

TO: Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee Members

FROM: Eric Carpenter, City Manager

DATE: September 20, 2024

TITLE: DISCUSS SPONSORSHIP OF THE WOLFSONIAN-FIU AUDIOVISUAL UPGRADE TO SUPPORT LOCAL CINEMA PROGRAMMING.

RECOMMENDATION

The Administration recommends that the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee discuss the sponsorship request of The Wolfsonian-FIU to upgrade its audio-visual equipment to support local cinema programming.

BACKGROUND/HISTORY

On July 24, 2024, at the request of Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez, the Mayor and City Commission approved a referral to the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee to discuss a sponsorship of The Wolfsonian-FIU audiovisual upgrade to support local cinema programming.

The Wolfsonian—Florida International University or The Wolfsonian-FIU, located in the heart of the Art Deco District of Miami Beach, Florida, is a museum, library and research center that uses its collection to illustrate the persuasive power of art and design. The Wolfsonian-FIU is a Miami Beach Cultural Anchor institution since 1997. For Fiscal Year 2024, the City has funded The Wolfsonian in the amount of \$31,065 through the City's Cultural Arts Council grant program.

ANALYSIS

The Wolfsonian-FIU submitted a Cinema Upgrade Proposal for an upgrade of its existing audiovisual equipment (including installation) in The Wolfsonian Auditorium with an explanation and breakdown of costs as follows:

Proposed Audio Visual Upgrade to Support Cinema Programming

Equipment & Systems

The proposal includes installing an updated projector with higher resolution and increased lumens, ensuring brighter, sharper, and more vivid images. Integrating an enhanced projection screen will further improve the visual clarity and quality. Compared to the current systems, the updated projector, screen, and audio equipment will improve the visitors' viewing experience.

However, The Wolfsonian-FIU's technicians noted that an acoustic review and improvements would be necessary for an optimal cinematic experience. A separate proposal and engagement with a firm specializing in acoustic assessments and recommendations would be required. The proposal does not include a request for an acoustical assessment or improvement.

The one-time budget to upgrade the audiovisual equipment (including installation) is \$86,513.86.

Proposed Cinema Programming

12 monthly free Friday night screenings

6 screening dates reserved for use by festivals or other partners

The free Friday night screenings would consist of two (2) series, running on alternating months. Each series would allow audiences to see a film and appreciate it in richer contexts formed by viewings of The Wolfsonian collections and conversations led by experts.

One series would focus on foreign-language films, presented in partnership with local consulates (The Wolfsonian has already successfully piloted this concept with the German consulate in 2023 and will repeat that in 2024). Each film would be selected in collaboration with cultural officers at the consulates, focusing on films from the pre-1945 period and/or corresponding to important themes from The Wolfsonian's collection. Each screening will be preceded by a special showing of relevant rare items in The Wolfsonian's library collection, led by Library Curator Frank Luca. A brief, expert led discussion would follow the screenings.

The other series would consist of films that complement The Wolfsonian's exhibition program. For example, in the coming year, The Wolfsonian will feature exhibitions that deal with the representation of landscapes in fine and decorative art, the work of Irish stained-glass artist Harry Clarke in the context of Ireland's independence movement, and visions of the future represented in 20th-century world fairs. Each of these themes lend themselves to pairings with films. The same is true of future planned exhibitions for 2025 and 2026, which will address (1) the evolution of guitar design and technology in the early 20th century and (2) jewelry design. A series of films about jewelry heists would be attractive, for example. As with the other series, we would offer a staff-led tour before each screening and expert-led discussions afterward.

Festival Screenings

In addition to the Miami Film Festival, many other specialized film festivals occur annually in South Florida including:

- Miami Jewish Film Festival
- Iffinito Brazilian Film Festival
- OUTshine Film Festival
- Popcorn Frights
- Miami Short Film Festival
- Third Horizon Film Festival
- American Black Film Festival
- Miami International Science Fiction Film Festival

By offering a new venue for screenings, The Wolfsonian would provide support to local festivals while increasing the number and diversity of film offerings to Miami Beach residents.

The annual programming budget (inclusive of all programming and operations costs) to support the development and presentation of twelve (12) Monthly Free Friday Night screenings and allow for six (6) screening dates for use by other partners is \$34,444.

Seating

The Wolfsonian currently offers aesthetically pleasing and functional seating for most viewing purposes. However, the existing seats are not padded and may not be ideal for prolonged programming. Included in The Wolfsonian's proposal is an optional line item to acquire a padded seating option to address this. While this enhancement is unnecessary to improve the cinematic experience, it can increase visitor comfort during extended viewing.

The one-time budget for purchasing 80 padded seats (including storage carts and delivery) is \$24,800.

The total sponsorship request including the updated audio-visual equipment, programming, and seating is approximately \$145,758.

The Wolfsonian has shared that they have submitted an upgrade of their current audio-visual equipment in the amount of \$26,511.64 to Florida International University. However, the equipment would only support PowerPoint presentations and still images, not films.

FISCAL IMPACT STATEMENT

The fiscal impact for upgrading the audio-visual equipment at the Wolfsonian and to provide additional programming and seating is approximately \$145,758.

Does this Ordinance require a Business Impact Estimate?

(FOR ORDINANCES ONLY)

The Business Impact Estimate (BIE) was published on .

See BIE at: <https://www.miamibeachfl.gov/city-hall/city-clerk/meeting-notice/>

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Funding for the upgrade has not been identified within the FY 2025 Preliminary Budget.

CONCLUSION

The Administration recommends that the Finance and Economic Resiliency Committee discuss the sponsorship request of The Wolfsonian-FIU to upgrade their audio-visual equipment and to support local cinema programming.

Applicable Area

Citywide

Is this a "Residents Right to Know" item, pursuant to City Code Section 2-17?

Yes

Is this item related to a G.O. Bond Project?

No

Was this Agenda Item initially requested by a lobbyist which, as defined in Code Sec. 2-481, includes a principal engaged in lobbying? No

If so, specify the name of lobbyist(s) and principal(s):

Department

Tourism and Culture

Sponsor(s)

Commissioner Kristen Rosen Gonzalez

Co-sponsor(s)

Condensed Title

Discuss Sponsorship of Wolfsonian-FIU Audiovisual Upgrade/Support Local Cinema Programming. (Rosen Gonzalez).