

## COCONUT GROVE PLAYHOUSE FACTS & TALKING POINTS

Here are the talking points you need to know about the continued progress of our project. The list is long but that's because there are so many good things happening. Please share these milestones with everyone who expresses interest in bringing great theater back to Coconut Grove:

- **Dade Heritage Trust Endorses the Playhouse Project.** On January 23, 2019, the Dade Heritage Trust, Miami-Dade County's largest historic preservation organization, fully endorsed our project. The approval by Dade Heritage Trust's board is a strong testament to the project's focus on respecting the historic integrity of the property and supports the action taken by the City of Miami Historic and Environmental Preservation Board (HEPB) on April 4, 2017, when it approved the master plan concept for the Coconut Grove Playhouse project.
- **Major Knight Foundation Grant for the Playhouse Theater Construction.** In December 2018, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation announced a major \$2 million grant to the County for the construction of the Coconut Grove Playhouse project's 300-seat theater.
- **Joe Adler Named Knight Arts Champion/Designates Grant for West Grove Arts.** The Knight Foundation also named GableStage's producing artistic director, Joseph Adler, a 2018 Knight Arts Champion and provided a \$10,000 contribution to be donated to the artist or arts organization of his choice. Because of GableStage's commitment to serving the entire Grove community with emphasis on the educational needs of the West Grove, Mr. Adler chose Arts for Learning for its robust student programs in the heart of the West Grove community.
- **County Prevails in Playhouse Court Appeal.** After two Coconut Grove residents appealed the City's Historic and Environmental Preservation Board approval of the Playhouse master plan, the City of Miami Commission overturned their Historic and Environmental Preservation Board's decision and imposed additional requirements on the project. In December 2018, the Appellate Division of the 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court issued a unanimous ruling by a three-judge panel overturning the City of Miami Commission's conditions, including the requirement to maintain the existing auditorium shell. This favorable ruling allows the Playhouse project to continue and complete the City's regulatory and permitting process.
- **A New Home for GableStage: An Outstanding Theater Company.** Once re-opened, the Playhouse will be operated by GableStage, one of the longest running and most highly acclaimed theater companies in South Florida. The quality of GableStage productions has been consistently recognized through numerous excellent critics' reviews, and the receipt of 234 nominations and 64 Carbonell Awards for its outstanding work.
- **A 21<sup>st</sup> Century 300-Seat Theater is Designed.** A new 300-seat state-of-the-art theater is being designed specifically to accommodate the needs of a producing, regional theater that will be operated by [GableStage](#)/GroveStage. The 300-seat size is the ideal size for modern, live dramatic theater productions that will create a sense

of intimacy between the audience and the performers, and is the size that most theater professionals and theater patrons prefer.

- **FIU and GableStage to Partner on the 1<sup>st</sup> MFA in Theater.** The first-ever Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) program in theater in Miami-Dade County is coming to our community! [Florida International University](#), together with [GableStage](#), will create the MFA program at the revived Coconut Grove Playhouse. The revived Playhouse will also become a hub for K-12 educational programs for theater offered by GableStage.
- **Parking Garage Agreement is Approved.** The County Commission approved a partnership agreement with the Miami Parking Authority (MPA) to work together on the Playhouse, including the development of a garage on the site of the existing surface parking. The garage will be lined with offices facing both Main Highway and the residential neighborhood. These uses will not only provide a friendly face to the garage building but will also help activate the site and generate revenue to help support the theater's operations and programming.
- **A Thoughtful Design for the Community.** The Coconut Grove Playhouse project has been designed specifically to be a cultural destination for the community-at-large and a good neighbor to the adjacent residential neighborhood of West Grove. An intimate, 300-seat theater fits well with the village ambience of Coconut Grove and the overall design offers the following features:
  - (a) A pedestrian promenade provides direct connectivity between the residential neighborhood and Main Highway;
  - (b) Lush landscaping and a pocket park promote the spirit associated with the Grove and add amenities to the residential neighborhood;
  - (c) A 300-seat theater means more manageable traffic in Coconut Grove;
  - (d) The theater's low-profile, single-story structures are on the residential side of the project, providing a smooth transition from the residential scale to the commercial face on Main Highway; and
  - (e) The service entrance to the theater on Charles Street includes a landscaping buffer for service vehicles to enter a long driveway for deliveries to occur deep inside the site, steering them away from the residential neighborhood.
- **The County Plan is in the Final Stage of the City of Miami's Regulatory Board Approval Process.** The plans proposed by the County have been thoughtfully prepared by Arquitectonica and its consultant team, including historic preservation architect Jorge L. Hernandez, and incorporate invaluable input received from project partners GableStage, FIU, and the Miami Parking Authority. These plans have successfully completed the following regulatory reviews:
  1. Historic Preservation and Environmental Review Board (HEPB) – Certificate of Appropriateness for the Master Plan approved 4-1 on April 7, 2017;
  2. Coordinated Review Board (CRC) – approved on January 10, 2018;

3. Urban Development Review Board (UDRB) – approved 6-0 on February 21, 2018;
4. Planning, Zoning and Appeals Board (PZAB) – approved with an 8-3 supermajority on November 7, 2018;
5. Historic Preservation and Environmental Review Board (HEPB) – Certificate of Appropriateness application for the complete plan submitted in December 2018 (Item #8 on the February 5, 2019 meeting agenda:  
[http://miamifl.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail\\_Meeting.aspx?ID=2234](http://miamifl.ig2.com/Citizens/Detail_Meeting.aspx?ID=2234)).

**Come support our Coconut Grove Playhouse application on February 5, 2019!**