

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-14
May 20, 2025
City Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Melissa Castro

Commissioner Ariel Fernandez

Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

Acting City Manager, Joe L. Gomez

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Deputy City Attorney, Stephanie Throckmorton

Public Speaker(s)

Agenda Item F-14

A Resolution of the City Commission calling a special election on the proposed ballot question and City Charter amendment to be held on November 3, 2026' providing for submission to the electors for approval or disapproval of a ballot question asking if the Charter should be amended to include a prohibition on amending the date of the election via ordinance, in so far as that prohibition is not in conflict with state law; providing for inclusion in the City Charter' providing for related matters; providing for an effective date. (Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

Mayor Lago: F-14.

City Attorney Suarez: F-14 is a Resolution of the City Commission calling a special election on the proposed ballot question and City Charter amendment to be held on November 3, 2026' providing for submission to the electors for approval or disapproval of a ballot question asking if the Charter should be amended to include a prohibition on amending the date of the election via

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Mayor Lago: Madam City Attorney.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Thank you Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners. So, similar to the other two items, this sends a question to the voters for the November 3, 2026, election. I wanted to, if its alright with you, take just a minute to talk through this. It's a little bit of similar to the one we adopted earlier. It addresses some work that we did earlier today on this Commission floor. So, as you know, earlier today, the Commission adopted an ordinance amended the Charter to call for elections in November of even numbered years. As of today, once that's codified that's the way the Charter reads. This sends a ballot question to the voters that asks the following: "Shall the City Charter be amended to prohibit changing the city's General Election date away from November of even numbered years through the adoption of an ordinance by the City Commission, insofar as that prohibition is not in conflict with state law." As you know, today we moved the election date via ordinance, which is clearly not in conflict with state law, as the City Attorney explained earlier. There is a little bit of discrepancy between a few provisions of state law. Some say about moving to coincide with the General Election via ordinance. Some just say generally moving the election. So, right now there are provisions in place that allow the city to move the election to coincide with the General Election via ordinance. That is very clear and what we did earlier today. So, this amendment, if adopted by the voters, would prohibit changing that city's General Election date away from November via ordinance insofar as the time when that item comes up it is not in conflict with state law.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, Madam City Attorney. Mr. Clerk, do you have any public comment.

City Clerk Urquia: No, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Close the public comment.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll move.

Mayor Lago: Do we have a second.

Commissioner Lara: Second.

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Totally in favor.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Lara.

Commissioner Lara: Completely in favor.

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Mayor Lago: Does the Commission have any other comments they'd like to add. Commissioner Castro.

Commissioner Castro: Yes. I mean call for a vote. I don't have anything to say.

Mayor Lago: Okay. Mr. Clerk, at the request of Commissioner Castro, call for a vote.

Commissioner Lara: Yes

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Castro: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: When I reread it now, it is being changed by ordinance, but we're saying it cannot be changed by ordinance even though the state law allows it. Isn't that putting us in conflict with state law?

City Attorney Suarez: So, we have changed it by ordinance to November, right. This would prohibit future changes by ordinance, so long as state law allows it. So, as Stephanie mentioned, some provisions in state law are very specific that it can be changed to coincide with the General Election. There is a more general provision in state law that says, a municipality can change the date of its election by ordinance. So, I think if there was an initiative – if this is adopted and the voters approve this and it becomes part of our Charter and then we have an initiative by someone to change the date of our election by ordinance away from a General Election, I think we would need to determine at that point whether state law would allow it at that time, would allow that prohibition I should say.

Commissioner Fernandez: Okay. Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes. Thank you.

(Vote: 5-0)