

City of Coral Gables
Special City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item B-7
May 6, 2025
City Hall Commission Chambers
405 Biltmore Way, Coral Gables, FL

City Commission

Mayor Vince Lago

Vice Mayor Rhonda Anderson

Commissioner Melissa Castro (Absent)

Commissioner Ariel Fernandez

Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Alberto Parjus

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Deputy City Attorney, Stephanie Throckmorton

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

Jackson Rip Holmes

Agenda Item B-7 [10:45 a.m.]

A Resolution of the City Commission amending Resolution No. 2023-267 (As Amended) to expand the existing Charter Review Committee to include two additional members with one member chosen by the City Manager and one Chosen by the City Attorney. (Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

City Attorney Suarez: B-7 Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes ma'am.

City Attorney Suarez: B-7 is a Resolution of the City Commission amending Resolution No. 2023-267 (As Amended) to expand the existing Charter Review Committee to include two additional members with one member chosen by the City Manager and one Chosen by the City Attorney.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. Madam City Attorney.

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Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Hello again. As previously discussed, in 2023, the current Charter Review Committee was convened with five members. The Committee has been meeting and has had various Town Halls and public meetings to review the existing Charter. This resolution expands the existing Charter Review Committee by adding two additional members with the City Attorney and City Manager each appointing one new member. The City Manager's appointee shall be a resident and the City Attorney's appointee shall be a current or former municipal or county attorney.

Mayor Lago: Thank you very much. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: One speaker, Mr. Mayor, Mrs. Maria Cruz.

Mrs. Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. I kind of agree with this item, except that it could be used to pack and to control the Charter Review. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Urquia: Jackson Holmes.

Mr. Holmes: Thank you. Again, I apologize for being so loquacious today and the reason that I'm doing it is to try to get Melissa Castro's voice out, since she's literally presumably in surgery at this moment. Please accept my apology. On this item, I wish that we had more time. It could be good; it could be bad. I share Maria Cruz' concern, maybe this could allow packing of the Charter Review Committee. We have time. Why is this rushed? Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll move it.

Mayor Lago: Do I have a second.

Commissioner Lara: Second.

Mayor Lago: Madam Vice Mayor.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'm fully supportive. This should have never happened where we had to bring this item to the voters here, but now I'd like to make that we have this going forward, not only for the voters, but have this solidified in our Charter going forward. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Lara.

Commissioner Lara: I'm fully supportive for the reasons stated by the Vice Mayor and actually, I believe that this actually will serve ultimately to depoliticize to the extent there was any such things

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with respect to the Charter Review Committee by having two non-elected officials selecting a representative. So, I'm supportive.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner Fernandez.

Commissioner Fernandez: I'm not supportive of this measure. As I stated in the past, I believe that the Charter Review Committee should be appointed by representatives of the residents. The City Attorney and City Manager, all due respect to both, work for the city, they are not appointed by the residents and for that reason I am not supportive. I am supportive of the measure we're sending to residents on the ballot, so that residents can decide if that's the direction they want to move in, but as to this measure, I am not supportive.

Mayor Lago: How did we get here today? We got here today once again by a decision that was made by Commissioner Fernandez, Commissioner Castro, and Commissioner Kirk Menendez. Previously, on multiple occasions, the Charter Review always had seven members, always had seven members. The intent of bringing it to five was to, like Mr. Rip Holmes just said, was to have control of the Charter Review. In my opinion, the more voices the better, the more engagement the better, the more professionals the better. Its worked perfectly fine in the past and that's why I'm presenting it to the voters to make a decision. I call the question.

Vice Mayor Anderson: Yes

Commissioner Fernandez: No

Commissioner Lara: Yes

Mayor Lago: Yes

(Vote: 3-1)