

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item E-4
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

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

Agenda Item E-4 [2:59 p.m.]

An Ordinance of the City Commission amending City Code Chapter 2, "Administration," Article III "Boards, Commissions, Committees," Section 2-79 "Order of Business," to clarify and amend public comment and Commission sponsorship procedures; providing for severability clause, repealer provision, codification, and providing for an effective date. (Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

Mayor Lago: E-4.

City Attorney Suarez: E-4 is An Ordinance of the City Commission amending City Code Chapter 2, "Administration," Article III "Boards, Commissions, Committees," Section 2-79 "Order of Business," to clarify and amend public comment and Commission sponsorship procedures; providing for severability clause, repealer provision, codification, and providing for an effective date.

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Agenda Item E-4 – Ordinance amending City Code Chapter 2-“Administration” – Article III
Boards-Commissions-Committees – Section 2-79 “Order of Business”

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Mr. Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, there has been no changes since first reading. As previously discussed, this changes a little bit of the public comment opportunities and clarifies when public comment is and is not going to be taken by the Commission.

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'll move it.

Commissioner Lara: Second.

Mayor Lago: Mr. Clerk, do you have any public comment.

City Clerk Urquia: Yes, Mr. Mayor, Mrs. Maria Cruz.

Ms. Cruz: Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. Just a very simple comment. I remember sitting in somebody's living room, excuse me, dining room, how much he wanted people to be able to talk whenever they wanted to talk. I guess the ideas have changed. We have become king and now we want our subjects, our people to follow the lead and do what I tell them to do. So, in honor of king Vince, I say it's a good idea.

City Clerk Urquia: That's it, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Lago: We have a motion and a second.

Commissioner Lara: Just want to say that the ordinance provides for orderly and reasonable discourse between the residents and the Commission as-a-whole. I believe that, as I said before, there's nobody on this dais that is king or queen or dictator, but I do believe that our mandate is to bring order, reasonableness, decorum back to this dais, so yes.

Vice Mayor Anderson: For those reasons and in addition, we should not be encouraging endless comments or filibusters in our Commission so that we can accomplish business and get things done.

Commissioner Castro: I understand the comments that Commissioner Lara and Vice Mayor Anderson said, and I concur. However, I also feel that I got elected here to give the people a voice and that's really restricting some individuals in particular, because I think this is a little targeted, it's my opinion, not a fact. For that reason, I say no. I'm here to represent the people, give them a voice, and this really enables them to do so.

Commissioner Fernandez: I'm against thwarting public comments, so I'm a no on this item.

Mayor Lago: Madam City Attorney, quick question. When you look at the City of Miami and you look at Miami-Dade County, Miami Beach, South Miami, is every other city using the same protocols for public comment?

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City Attorney Suarez: So, Mayor, yes, and generally they allow public comment during a public comment period or when there are public hearing items during those times when it's required by law, and of course even with this change, anyone can come and speak on any item on the agenda during the open public comment period.

Mayor Lago: The reason why I bring that up is because I think Commissioner Castro made a good point. It's not fact what she's saying, just her opinion, you have to remember that, because again, you can say a lot of things here and they are not the truth, at the end of the day, but these are facts. The ordinance is the same as every other city and the whole point is about being efficient and being considerate of other people's time, so that everyone can come in and join public comment. My vote is yes.

(Vote: 3-2)