

City of Coral Gables City Commission Meeting
Agenda Item F-19
August 26, 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 (Absent)

Commissioner Richard D. Lara

City Staff

City Attorney, Cristina Suárez

City Manager, Peter Iglesias

City Clerk, Billy Urquia

Public Speaker(s)

Maria Cruz

Rip Holmes

Agenda Item F-19

A Resolution of the City Commission rescinding Resolution No. 2025-163 which called for a Special Election to be held for approval or disapproval of a ballot questions prohibiting future amendments to the date of the City's Election via ordinance and cancelling the Special Election for that question. (Sponsored by Commissioner Castro)

Mayor Lago: F-19.

City Attorney Suarez: F-19 is a Resolution of the City Commission rescinding Resolution No. 2025-163 which called for a Special Election to be held for approval or disapproval of a ballot questions prohibiting future amendments to the date of the City's Election via ordinance and cancelling the Special Election for that question.

City Commission Meeting

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Agenda Item F-19 – Resolution rescinding Resolution No. 2025-163 which called for a Special Election to be held for approval or disapproval of a ballot question

[Date]

1

Commissioner Castro: I think this is very, very easy. It's invalid, and it's wasteful. Florida law and Miami-Dade County Charter already require voter approval before a city can change its election date. The Coral Gables Ordinance moving elections to November was unlawful to begin with. So, no matter what, that ballot question was to let the people decide. The people have to decide anyway. So, the language is conflicting. It's a waste of taxpayer money to hold a Special Election on a question that's illegally and meaningless misleading. That's it.

Mayor Lago: Madam City Attorney, through the guidance of the City Attorney, that's why we made the decision to move forward the way we did. Let me be clear. We already have it in April. So, at the end of the day, we're still waiting for a decision from the Supreme Court. We're pending. I haven't heard it come in yet. So whether we vote one way or not, we've already put it on for an April election, correct?

City Attorney Suarez: Well, you've given direction that we bring it back to put it on the April.

Mayor Lago: So, we're waiting. We're waiting. We're waiting for the decision for the Supreme Court. And we'll wait. We'll wait. You'd like to make a motion on that?

Commissioner Castro: Do you prefer I defer this again?

Mayor Lago: No, no, no. Just make a motion.

Commissioner Castro: I mean, did you understand what the motion was? It's regarding the ballot question that was out asking that the residents have to vote. The residents have to vote on it no matter what.

Mayor Lago: Commissioner, it's your item. You do as you please. If you would like to make a motion and move forward, you can move forward. Whatever you like.

Commissioner Castro: I'm moving it.

Mayor Lago: Okay, do we have a second?

Vice Mayor Anderson: I'd like to wait for the decision of the court.

Mayor Lago: So, the item dies. Moving on to F-20.

Commissioner Castro: I'm sorry?

City Clerk Urquia: There's no action by the Commissioner. Want to take public comment, Mr. Mayor?

Mayor Lago: Yes, I'll take public comment.

City Commission Meeting

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

Commissioner Lara: Which item?

Mayor Lago: F-19, going back about a week. We're not doing anything on it. It's pending.

Mrs. Cruz: I was not allowed to speak before. So, Mrs. Maria Cruz, 1447 Miller Road. All I'm going to say is that in the previous discussion about the ballots, I requested to speak because there were items added to that proposal that were not on the agenda. And the City Attorney, the Deputy City Attorney told me that it would be dealt with, but the dealing with was do it later instead of allowing me to speak since they added stuff. My understanding by Robert's Rules is that if you add new material, and boy, did we add new material, I should have been allowed to speak. So, I will say it now. Okay. I will say it right now. I think it's very interesting that we are at the point where if we don't get it one way, we'll get it another way. We had several referendums going around the city. They had over a year to obtain the votes and the signatures. Most of the signatures were thrown out so they couldn't get it on the ballot. And now we're going to go around again. So, what the king wants, the king will get. And you know what? The people will speak because this is not Cuba as much as we are so democratic that we defend Cuba every day. In this city, in this Chamber, we do not allow people to speak even when they're entitled to.

City Clerk Urquia: So, Mayor and Mr. Rip Holmes.

Deputy City Attorney Throckmorton: Commissioner Castro, Mayor, if I can just clarify for a moment. As I stated, we will bring back those items that were mentioned about those additional questions for the April 21, 2026, which is the reason that we said we would bring them back at a later date because they were not advertised. So, for the record.

Mayor Lago: Yes sir.

Mr. Holmes: Hi. As you know, I believe that the citizens do not want Miracle Mile to become an eight-story street or full of mixed use, mid-rise buildings, whatever. And so we need to preserve democracy. I want to get to an issue, if you'll allow me, about this money stuff, right? I believe that the reason that there was a discussion to begin with, that this was even proposed to move the election to November, is because of developer money being able to, I don't want to say buy elections, but I'll leave that open. What happens is, and we all know this because we vote, right? So, you go out and you vote in a governor's race. You vote in a president's race. You have a guilty conscience. Gosh, there's local elections. Do you even know what you're voting for? And if there's no name recognition, a lot of people say, well, I'm not going to vote on something. I don't even know what the issues are. And, but if there is name recognition that was bought by developers,

then, oh, geez, I recognize that. Okay, yeah, I'll vote for him. And that's the concern here, that the election can be bought on November. They can't be bought in April. Thank you.

Mayor Lago: Thank you, sir.

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

City Manager Iglesias: Through the Mayor.

Mayor Lago: Yes.

City Manager Iglesias: Mayor, may I clarify the zoning on the Mile?

Mayor Lago: Yes, of course.

City Manager Iglesias: Thank you. Thank you, Mayor.

Planning and Zoning Director: Jennifer Garcia, Planning and Zoning Director. As you know, we have the Zane Friedman overlay district that's encompassing Miracle Mile, as well as the half of the block north and south. For properties that are on Miracle Mile themselves, it's limited to four stories or 50 feet.

Mayor Lago: Okay, thank you very much. All right, moving on to item...F-20.

City Clerk Urquia: I'm sorry, Mr. Mayor. I apologize. So on F-19, are we going to defer the item?

Mayor Lago: There's no second.

City Clerk Urquia: Understood. Thank you, sir.