



City of Coral Gables
CITY COMMISSION MEETING
June 8, 2021

ITEM TITLE:

Resolution. A Resolution Directing City Staff to Resume Community Engagement, Hold Workshops with the City Commission in early 2022, and Place any Necessary Items on the June 2022 City Commission Agenda for the Commission's Consideration of whether to Place a Ballot Question Before the Voters Relating to the Undergrounding of Utilities Citywide (Sponsored by Mayor Lago)

BRIEF HISTORY:

In November 2019, the City Commission was presented non-binding ballpark estimates for the cost of conversion of overhead utilities to underground utilities. After the presentation, the City Commission adopted Resolution No. 2019-347 directing staff to prepare and execute a community engagement campaign to include educational materials, vignettes, renderings, community meetings, charettes, and written/oral surveys/polls to effectively engage with community stakeholders, listen, and learn their views, concerns, and insights on the potential undergrounding of utilities. Then, in December 2019, the City Commission was presented a preliminary action plan timeline for the analysis, project scoping, community engagement, and expected timeline for workshops and possible City Commission action. At that time, the expected timeline was to immediately begin work on the community engagement campaign, hold workshops with the City Commission in April 2020, and place any necessary items on the June 2020 City Commission meeting for the Commission's consideration, with the prospect of placing a ballot question before voters on the November 2020 ballot.

Between December 2019 and March 2020, in preparation for community engagement and outreach, the project lead team worked on a preliminary financial analysis, cost estimates, project scoping, and mapping, and on preparing community outreach materials and certain stakeholder communication with that information. During those months, the team began obtaining preliminary feedback from the community and scheduled large-scale citywide community engagement meetings for the end of March 2020, but days before the first meeting, the community was shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the community engagement efforts were suspended.

On August 25, 2020, staff presented an update to the City Commission and recommended that if the City Commission wishes to continue working toward the possibility of having a question relating to the citywide undergrounding of utilities on a future ballot, that the matter not be placed before the voters prior to 2022, to allow for the community engagement campaign to resume in the second half of 2021, should it be safe to do so at that time. In Resolution 2020-182, the City Commission agreed that due to the health,

safety, and economic challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, the timeline should be adjusted as recommended by staff.

Today, vaccines are widely available, the positivity rate is consistently below 5 percent, and the City will return to regular operations on June 14, 2021 (*see* Resolution No. 2021-118). This resolution sets forth the City Commission's wish that staff resume engaging with the community on the undergrounding of utilities citywide, continue working to prepare for further City Commission workshops and the potential execution of the project, and, in the summer of 2022, consider whether to move forward with a ballot question in the November 2022 election.

ATTACHMENT(S):

- 1. Draft Resolution**
- 2. Power Point Presentation**