



To: Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners, and Charter Review Committee members

Cc: Peter Iglesias, City Manager and Billy Urquia, City Clerk

From: Cristina M. Suárez, City Attorney

Re: Summary of the June 4, 2026, Charter Review Committee Discussions

Date: June 17, 2026

On June 4, 2026, the Charter Review Committee (“Committee”) met to discuss old and new business regarding potential amendments to the City Charter. Ultimately, due to illness and other obligations, the Charter Review Committee did not have a quorum for the June 4, 2026 meeting.

Those members present, Chairperson Donald D. Slesnick, II., Board Member Eve Boutsis, and Board Member Jane Moscovitz, discussed those published agenda items and wish to provide the City Commission with the research the Committee reviewed, as well as a summary of their discussions of these topics. Please note that while the summary below reflects the discussion held during the meeting, none of the following are official recommendations of the Charter Review Committee as, in accordance with applicable law, no votes of the Charter Review Committee were taken during the June 4th meeting.

Initiative and Referendum

At the request of the Committee, the City Attorney’s office provided the attached draft amendments to Section 10 “Initiative and Referendum” of the City Charter (**Exhibit A**), as well as the attached **Exhibit B** which consists of a summary of those threshold percentages for the initiative and referendum process in neighboring local governments. Those members of the Committee present on June 4th wish to express to the Commission their support of the proposed clean up to Section 10, as well as the Committee’s desire that the City Commission review and consider potential amendments to the City’s initiative and referendum thresholds.

Currently, the City Charter requires the support of 20% of the registered voters (as evidenced by the official voter registration records for the regular election immediately preceding the initiative petition) for an initiative effort and 10% of the registered voters for a referendum effort to proceed.

Those members present in the last meeting wanted to note for the Commission that the City's thresholds, in particular the 20% initiative threshold, were higher than those of neighboring governments.

Mayoral Term

At the request of the Chairperson, the Committee reviewed information regarding a four-mayoral term. In 2005, voters approved an amendment to the City Charter providing for a four-year mayoral term beginning in 2007. That amendment was approved by 52% of the voters. In 2009 the voters adopted an amendment to the City Charter providing for a return to a two-year mayoral term in 2011. That amendment returning to a two-year term was approved by 50.63% of the voters.

Those members present at the June 4th Committee meeting discussed that a four-year term may be helpful in allowing a newly elected mayor sufficient time to ramp up and further their initiatives prior to a campaign and election and asked that the City Commission be provided with the attached information considered by the Committee (**Exhibit C**).

Park Uses

Board Member Eve Boutsis asked that the Charter Review Committee be provided with details regarding a provision in the City of Hollywood's Charter regarding the sale of certain municipally owned lands. That section, attached here as **Exhibit D**, provides that any real property which is beach or beachfront, a park, a golf course or another recreational facility, which the city proposes to sell or to otherwise dispose of, must be approved by a majority vote of the city's electors voting on such proposal.

There is an additional proposal to amend the charter in Hollywood which will add a similar requirement to certain long-term leases of those same municipally owned properties.

The Charter Review Committee made no official recommendations or suggestions regarding this topic but asked that this information be provided to the City Commission for review and consideration.

Attached:

1. Exhibit A: Draft Amendments to Section 10 of the City Charter
2. Exhibit B: Initiative and Referendum Comparison Chart
3. Exhibit C: Four-year Mayoral Term information
4. Exhibit D: City of Hollywood Charter Provision

Section 10. Initiative, Referendum, Recall, and Charter Amendments

10.01- Power of initiative- The people shall have the power to propose ordinances, including the ones that grant franchise or privileges, and to have them being adopted by the voters. This power shall be known as the Initiative. The person(s) proposing the exercise of this power shall submit the proposal to the City Commission which shall, without delay, approve as to form a petition for circulation. Within thirty days of the Commission's approval of the form of the Initiative petition, the person(s) circulating the petition shall obtain the signatures of at least twenty percent of the City's registered voters as evidenced by the official voter registration records for the regular election that immediately preceded the filing of the initiative petition.

Within ten days after the petition is filed with the City Clerk, the City Clerk, with the assistance of the Miami-Dade County Supervisor of Elections, shall determine whether the signatures therein are sufficient. An insufficient petition may be amended within thirty days of the City Clerk certifying that the petition is insufficient, by filing an amended petition containing additional papers signed and filed in conformance with the requirements applicable to the original petition, as set forth in this Section. The City Clerk shall examine an amended petition within ten days after it is filed. The City Clerk's finding that a petition is insufficient shall not prejudice the filing of a new petition for the same purpose.

Upon the presentation to the City Commission of a petition or petitions signed by sufficient qualified electors therein, being a proposed ordinance that said City Commission has authority to adopt, it must either adopt such measure without alteration within sixty (60) days of the issuance of a certificate of a petition's sufficiency by the City Clerk and Miami-Dade County supervisor of elections or submit the same to its electorate at the next succeeding City election occurring more than sixty (60) days after issuance of the City Clerks and Miami-Dade County Supervisor of Elections' certificate as to the petition's sufficiency or submit the proposed ordinance to a vote of the electors through a special election to be held not less than sixty days and not more than one hundred and twenty days from the date of the Commission's final action on the proposed ordinance. The proposed ordinance submitted to a vote of the electors shall be in its original form as set forth in the underlying Initiative petition.

10.02 Referendum- With the exception of an appropriation ordinance or an ordinance making the annual tax levy, the electors shall have the power to approve or reject at the polls any ordinance passed by the Commission or submitted by the Commission for a vote of the electors. This power shall be known as referendum.

- (A) *Effective Dates for Ordinances.* No ordinance shall go into effect until thirty days after its passage, unless: (1) the text of the ordinance declares it to be an emergency measure for urgent public need, and for the preservation of peace, health, safety or property; and (2) the ordinance is passed by a vote of at least four-fifths of the members of the Commission. No ordinance granting or amending any public utility measure, or

amending or repealing any measure adopted by the electors through a referendum, shall be regarded as an emergency ordinance.

- (B) *Referendum Petitions.* Within thirty days after the Commission passes an ordinance that is subject to referendum, a petition signed by at least ten percent of the total number of registered voters in the City may be filed with the City Clerk requesting that such ordinance, or any specified part thereof, be repealed or submitted to a vote of the electors. A referendum petition shall clearly specify the ordinance or part thereof for which repeal or a vote of the electors is sought; however, the petition is not required to contain the text of the ordinance. For purposes of determining whether at least ten percent of the City's registered voters have signed a referendum petition, the total number of registered voters in the City shall be evidenced by Miami-Dade County's official voter registration records for the regular election that immediately preceded the filing of the referendum petition and Miami-Dade County Supervisor of Election's verification of the required signatures.
- (i) *Commission Action in Relation to Referendum Petitions.* If the City Clerk finds a referendum petition or an amended referendum petition to be sufficient: (1) the City Clerk shall certify that fact to the Commission at its next regular meeting; and (2) until the electors approve the ordinance, as provided herein, the ordinance or the part thereof specified in the referendum petition shall not go into effect and further action under the ordinance shall be suspended if the ordinance has already gone into effect. Moreover, upon receipt of the Clerk's certification of a referendum petition, the Commission shall formally reconsider the ordinance or part thereof at issue in the referendum petition. If the ordinance or part thereof at issue in the referendum petition is not repealed after the Commission's reconsideration of said ordinance or part thereof, the referendum petition shall be submitted to the electors at a municipal election held at least thirty days after the Commission's reconsideration vote. . If, however, no regular election is scheduled within six months from the date of the Commission's reconsideration of the ordinance, the Commission shall submit the referendum petition to a vote of the electors through a special election to be held not less than sixty days and not more than one hundred and twenty days from the date of the Commission's reconsideration but no later than 120 days after the Commission's reconsideration vote.. The Commission, by a vote of at least four-fifths of its members, may submit the ordinance or part thereof at issue in the referendum petition to the electors at a special election to be held at least thirty days after the Commission's reconsideration vote. If when submitted to the electors any ordinance or part thereof is not approved by a majority of those voting thereon, it shall be deemed repealed.
- (ii) *Form of Referendum Ballot.* Any number of ordinances or parts thereof may be voted on in the same election and may be submitted on the same ballot. The form of the ballot shall be prepared by the City Attorney and also comply with all applicable requisites of the Miami-Dade County Supervisor of Elections and the applicable provisions of Florida law.
- (iii) *Preliminary Steps - Referendums for Expenditures, Bond issues, Appropriations, and Franchises.* If a referendum petition filed in relation to an ordinance passed

by the Commission involves the expenditure of money, a bond issue, the granting of a franchise, or a public improvement, all preliminary steps to such actual expenditure, actual issuance or sale of bonds or actual execution of the contract for such franchise or improvement may be taken prior to the referendum election.

- (iv) *Emergency Ordinances Subject to Referendum.* Any emergency ordinance or other ordinance which, according to the provisions of Section 10 of this Charter, have gone into effect prior to the filing of a referendum petition thereon shall be subject to referendum as in the case of other ordinances and further action thereunder shall be suspended from the date of the Clerk's certification to the Commission that a sufficient referendum petition has been filed. If, when submitted to a vote of the electors any such ordinance is not approved by a majority of those voting, said ordinance shall be considered repealed and all rights and privileges conferred by it shall be null and void. Nonetheless, any such repealed ordinance shall be deemed to have sufficient authority for any payments made or expenses incurred in accordance therewith prior to the date of the Clerk's certification to the Commission that a sufficient referendum petition has been filed as to the ordinance.
- (v) *Conflicting ordinances.* If two or more ordinances adopted or approved at the same election conflict with respect to any of their provisions, the provisions of said ordinances that do not conflict shall go into effect. With regard to the provisions that do conflict, the provisions contained in the ordinance that receives the highest affirmative vote shall prevail.
- (vii) *Signatures and Affidavits for Referendum and Recall Petitions.* The signatures for referendum or recall petitions are not required to be appended to one paper; however, for each separate petition paper there shall be attached an affidavit of the petition circulator,
- (viii) *Referendum Petition Papers.* All petition papers concerning a referendum petition shall be assembled and filed with the City Clerk as one instrument. Within ten days after a petition is filed, the City Clerk with the assistance of the Miami-Dade County Supervisor of Elections shall determine whether each paper of the petition is properly attested and whether the petition is signed by a sufficient number of electors. Upon completing his or her examination of the petition, the City Clerk shall attach thereto a certificate showing the result of the examination. If the City Clerk should certify that the petition is insufficient, he or she shall set forth in his or her certificate the particular manner(s) in which the petition is defective and shall at once notify the petitioners' committee of his or her findings.
- (ix) *Amendment of Referendum and Recall Petitions.* A referendum petition may be amended within ten days of the City Clerk certifying that the petition is insufficient, by filing an amended petition containing additional papers signed and filed in conformance with the requirements applicable to the original petition, as set forth in this Section. The City Clerk shall examine the amended petition within ten days after filed. If the City Clerk determines that the amended petition is again insufficient, he or she shall file the amended petition in his or her office, notify the petitioners' committee of his or her findings, and take no further action on such

insufficient petition. The City Clerk's finding that a petition is insufficient shall not prejudice the filing of a new petition for the same purpose.

10.03 Recall- Recall and recall petitions shall be governed by applicable State and County laws.

10.04 Charter Amendments-

The Charter may be amended in accordance with these provisions:

(a)

Initiation by Resolution. The Commission may, by resolution, propose amendments to this Charter and upon passage of the initiating resolution shall submit the proposed amendment to a vote of the electors at the next general election held within the City or at a special election called for such purpose.

(b)

Initiation by Petition. The electors of the City may propose amendments to this Charter by petition. Each petition proposing amendments to this Charter shall be commenced, in the form, filed, certified as to its sufficiency and/or withdrawn in the same manner as an ordinance proposed by initiative pursuant to 10.01. Upon certification of the sufficiency of the petition, the City Commission shall submit the proposed amendment to a vote of the electors at the next general election if such election is scheduled to be held not less than sixty (60) days or more than one hundred and twenty (120) days from the date on which the petition was certified or at a special election called for that purpose. A special election, if necessary, shall be held not less than sixty (60) days or more than one hundred and twenty (120) days from the date on which the petition was certified.

(c)

Results of Election. If a majority of the qualified electors voting on a proposed amendment vote for its adoption, it shall be considered adopted upon certification of the election results. If conflicting amendments are adopted at the same election, the one receiving the greatest number of affirmative votes shall prevail to the extent of such conflict.

	Initiative	Referendum
Miami	10% of electors registered at last general municipal election	15% of the total number of voters registered at the last general municipal election
Miami-Dade County	4% of registered voters on the day the petition is approved, no more that 25% from voters registered in any single district.	4% of registered voters on the day the petition is approved, no more that 25% from voters registered in any single district.
Pinecrest	10% of the total number of electors registered to vote in the last regular village election	10% of the total number of electors registered to vote in the last regular village election
Doral	10% of the total number of electors registered to vote at the last regular City election	10% of the total number of electors registered to vote at the last regular City election
Homestead	15% of the total number of electors registered to vote at the last regular City election	25% of the total number of electors registered to vote at the last regular City election.
Miami Beach	10% of the registration of qualified electors, or if 15% of registration election within 60 days of certification of petition	10% of the registration of qualified electors, or if 15% of registration election within 60 days of certification of petition
Naples	15% of the total number of qualified voters registered to vote at the last regular city election	15% of the total number of qualified voters registered to vote at the last regular city election
North Miami	10% of the registered voters at the last regular municipal election	10% of the registered voters at the last preceding regular municipal election
State of Florida	A number of electors in each of one half of the congressional districts of the state, and of the state as a whole, equal to 8% of the voters cast in each of such districts respectively and in the state as a whole in the last preceding election in which presidential electors were chosen.	
Coral Gables	20% of the registered voters as evidenced by the official voter registration records for the regular election that immediately preceded the filing of the initiative petition	10% of the total number of registered voters for the City's regular election immediately preceding the filing of the referendum petition

Orlando	15% of the total number of registered voters as of January 1 of the year in which petition initiated	15% of the total number of qualified voters registered to vote as of January 1 in which petition is initiative
Tallahassee	Charter amendments: 10% of the total number of registered electors as of the preceding general election	

DISCUSSION POINTS FOUR YEAR MAYOR TERM

1. The existing system is not historically “sacred” to this city – it is a product of the mid-eighties. Once everyone served a two year term, but in an effort to achieve continuity and stability the Commissioners were given four year terms – only the Mayor was left with a two year term of office – while there is little legislative history about the change, it is assumed that the only compelling reason was to drive up interest in each election by having a Mayor’s race.
2. The four year term for the Commissioners has worked to give them the time necessary to “vision” and to plan objectives over a longer period of time. It has well served the citizens of our community that the municipal government has elected officials that can set a course for the future and follow through with the action necessary to achieve the stated goals.
3. If the concept set forth in paragraph #2 has merit – then it logically applies also to the Mayor’s position. The Mayor is the “Chair” of the Commission, in many cases the natural spokesperson for the Commission, the member of the Commission who holds regular daily office hours at city hall to respond to citizen needs and should be the person leading the way in planning for the future. There is great difficulty, however, in being the planning leader when the Commissioners have a longer tenure than the Mayor – the Mayor’s long term planning is less relevant in that he/she may not be around long enough to follow through.
4. In the present two year term cycle, a sitting Mayor must focus on re-election each eighteen months. Thus, the Mayor who is expected (and who should be) the leader of the Commission in planning and policy making and the principal link to the citizens (while still keeping a “full-time” profession) must also be a candidate for ¼ of the term. Being a candidate requires activities other than those related to the governance of the city and drains time away from the purpose for which he/she was elected. While the same demands occur in a four year scenario – the frequency is much less often – and thus, focus can be kept on the governance matters for longer periods of time without the interruption of political pressures.
5. When the citizenry has confidence in the democratic process and in their selection of a Mayor – there is no cause to want a system which is disruptive. Political campaigns by their very nature cause turmoil and disruption – turmoil and disruption which are good for democratic institutions to continually reexamine and review the quality and direction of leadership. But the object here is to give enough “breathing room” between such periods of evaluation as to promote good stable municipal government operating in a “long-view” environment.
6. Examples of programs which this Commission has worked on for a period of time exceeding two years (thus, in order to oversee these projects from initiation to completion would require that a person stay in office for more than two years):
 - a. implementation of trolley system
 - b. zoning code rewrite/master plan rewrite/implementation of charette
 - c. construction of downtown city parking garage

- d. consideration of general obligation bond issue
- e. restoration of the Coral Gables Country Club
- f. establishment of City Museum
- g. re-building the City's monetary reserve fund
- h. union negotiations regarding refinements to pension plan cost sharing
- i. long range planning of capital projects (infrastructure needs)
- j. dredging of canals
- k. lighting of streets
- l. others.....



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Voters Choose To Amend City Charter

Coral Gables voters agreed to amend the City Charter to increase the term of the Office of the Mayor to four years, and to increase the formal bid threshold for public works projects.

Fifty two percent of Coral Gables electors voted on April 12 to amend the City Charter to increase the term of the Office of the Mayor to four years, effective on April 2007. Also, 58 percent of voters elected to increase the threshold to \$25,000 to trigger a formal bid and award process on public works projects. Voter turnout last April at the General Biennial and Special Municipal Referendum Election was 15.91 percent, with 4,384 people voting out of 27,560 registered voters in Coral Gables.

Mayor Don Slesnick and

Commissioner Rafael "Ralph" Cabrera Jr. were reelected without opposition. Incumbent Maria Anderson, who ran a positive campaign on the accomplishments in the City during her tenure, won her second term on the City Commission by defeating architect Felix Pardo. Anderson received 55 percent of the votes, while Pardo obtained 44 percent.

Judge John Schlesinger from

the Eleventh Judicial Circuit of Florida delivered the Oath of Office to the three elected officials in a ceremony attended by dozens of friends and well-wishers. ☪

Electores Aprueban Dos Enmiendas a la Carta Constitucional

Los electores de la Ciudad de Coral Gables

VER PÁGINA 5

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Mayoral Terms

Coral Gables	2 years
Miami	4 years
Miami-Dade County	4 years
Pinecrest	4 years
Doral	4 years
Homestead	4 years
Miami Beach	2 years
Naples	4 years
North Miami	2 years
Orlando	4 years
Tallahassee	4 years

Sec. 13.01. Sale of city-owned real property.

(a) Any property which the city proposes to sell or otherwise dispose of must be appraised by one (1) independent, qualified appraiser. However, property which is listed by the Broward County Property Appraiser as having a value of not more than twenty-five thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) may be sold or disposed of without an appraisal. If such independent appraiser values the property in excess of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000.00), an additional independent appraisal shall be obtained. If the two (2) appraisals differ by more than twenty-five percent (25%), a third independent appraisal shall be obtained.

(b) A five-sevenths (5/7) vote of the total commission membership shall be necessary for the sale or disposition of any property valued by any of the appraisers in excess of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000.00). If the property is valued by any of the appraisers at a value which equals or exceeds one million dollars (\$1,000,000.00), the sale or other disposition of such property shall require approval by either a five-sevenths (5/7) vote of the city commission or by a majority vote of the city's electors voting on such proposal.

(c) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, any real property which is beach or beachfront, a park, a golf course or another recreational facility, which the city proposes to sell or to otherwise dispose of, must be approved by a majority vote of the city's electors voting on such proposal.

(d) The threshold amounts specified in subsections (a) and (b) shall be adjusted based on information contained in the "Certification of Taxable Value." designated as Form DR-420, received each year from the Broward County Property Appraiser. Specifically, each threshold amount shall be adjusted by multiplying it by a fraction the numerator of which is the difference between the amount designated as "[c]urrent year taxable value of real property for operating purposes" in the last "Certification of Taxable Value" received prior to the date of a sale or other disposition of property and the sum of the amounts designated as "[c]urrent year net new taxable value" in each "Certification of Taxable Value" received from 2011 to the last "Certification of Taxable Value" received prior to the date of the sale or other disposition, and the denominator of which is the amount designated as "[c]urrent year taxable value of real property for operating purposes" in the "Certification of Taxable Value" received in 2010.

(e) Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, whenever the city owns two or more parcels of real property that are contiguous and the city proposes to sell or otherwise dispose of one or more but not all of such contiguous parcels, a five-sevenths (5/7) vote of the total commission membership shall be required to authorize such sale or other disposition, regardless of the valuation of the parcels proposed to be sold or otherwise disposed of.

(Ord. O-84-14, passed 2-3-84; Am. Ord. O-99-17, passed 6-16-99; Am. Ord. O-99-34, passed 10-20-99; Am. Ord. O-2010-29, passed 7-21-10; Am. Ord. O-2018-09, passed 11-6-18)