

CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-136

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COMMISSION 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 VOTERS RELATING TO THE UNDERGROUNDING OF UTILITIES CITYWIDE.

WHEREAS, in November 2019, the City Commission was presented non-binding ballpark estimates for the cost of conversion of overhead utilities to underground utilities; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the community engagement efforts were suspended; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, 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; and

WHEREAS, 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); and

WHEREAS, the City Commission wishes for staff to resume engaging with the community on the undergrounding of utilities citywide, continue work 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.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF CORAL GABLES, FLORIDA:


SECTION 1. That the foregoing “Whereas” clauses are hereby ratified and confirmed as being true and correct and are hereby made a specific part of this Resolution upon the adoption hereof.

SECTION 2. That the City Commission does hereby direct staff to resume community engagement, continue work to prepare for further City Commission action and the potential execution of the citywide undergrounding of utilities, hold workshops with the City Commission in early 2021, and place any necessary items on the June 2022 City Commission meeting agenda for the Commission’s consideration on whether to place a ballot question before voters, relating to the undergrounding of utilities citywide.


SECTION 3. That this Resolution shall become effective upon the date of its passage and adoption herein.

PASSED AND ADOPTED THIS EIGHTH DAY OF JUNE, A.D., 2021.
(Moved: Anderson / Seconded: Menendez)
(Yeas: Mena, Menendez, Anderson, Fors, Jr., Lago)
(Unanimous: 5-0 Vote)
(Agenda Item: G-2)


APPROVED:

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VINCE LAGO
MAYOR

ATTEST:

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BILLY Y. URQUIA
CITY CLERK

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND LEGAL SUFFICIENCY:

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MIRIAM SOLER RAMOS
CITY ATTORNEY