

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.....



Beautiful NEWS

The latest news and information about the City of Coral Gables **Spring 2005**

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

**Did you know
our community
is safer than it was
five years ago?**

For the full story on the latest figures on crime reduction, go to www.coralgables.com.