

**Addendum to
July 23 meeting agenda**

ADDITIONAL

MATERIALS

TO: Charter Review Task Force members

DATE: July 18, 2007

FROM: Maurice A. Ferré

The issues that need to be studied, discussed, debated and hopefully concluded by the Miami Dade County Charter Review Task Force (CRTF) can be summarized under two categories:

- I. **Governance issues.**
 - II. **Ethics and money issues.**
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GOVERNANCE

- I. We are no longer a Council/Manager form of government. Yet, the Miami-Dade County (MDC) HOME RULE in the Florida Constitution creates serious restrictions in reforms of both governance and ethics issues in MDC. On January 23, 2007 the electors of MDC opted for a Strong Mayor format, after the Appellate Court unanimously ruled it legal. What we currently have is a hybrid form of local government. Home Rule permits very broad and very extensive powers to MDC. Many that have never been used.

Public opinion is demanding reforms in governance. The CRTF, and more importantly, the BOCC needs to react to the crises County government is currently in.

My conclusion: Under the “consent of the governed” percept, MDC needs to find a better balance of powers between the executive and the legislative branches in MDC. Broadly, that requires, a completely new relationship, always under Home Rule. MDC should become the central, regional government on major local regional issues. The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) should be structured and function as it were a municipal assembly (Jacksonville, San Francisco, Atlanta, New York City, Chicago and many others.) That is, the BOCC, even under Home Rule, should only handle legislative matters and not be involved directly in administrative matters, other than setting the rules and the all important overview function.

ETHICS

- II. No one will argue that, thanks mostly to The Miami Herald, there have been a series of at least 15 to 20 major corruption or wrongful practice

government issues in the past few years that bring to question our governance format, specially pertaining to matters of ethics and corruption in government. Each of these breaches should be discussed by the CRTF with the sole purpose of deciding how to avoid a repeat of these breakdowns: Housing, MIA fuel, WASA cellular telephones and cash flow, MIA-ATT/Bell South debacle, Empowerment Zone/Poinciana, PAC and North Terminal overruns, Public Works low performance (10 years to improve traffic light upgrade), and the many others that need to be discussed, debated and improved.

My conclusion: Complete overhaul of all systems that deal with money or change of value of properties. (Real Estate etc.)

- I will submit specific recommendations that expand on I. and II above.
- I include articles published in The Miami Herald (TMH) and some more extensive original versions.
- I include articles submitted to The Miami Herald (TMH), but not published.
- I include five articles published in El Nuevo Herald (ENH) in Spanish that are longer and more explicit than counterparts in English in TMH.

Articles – MAF

Editorials – TMH

- 1.) “Un Alcalde reformista para Miami Dade”: ENH, 30 de octubre del 2004.
- 2.) “Reforms, structural changes a must”: TMH, March 10, 2005.
- 3.) “Buscando balance”; ENH, 10 de marzo del 2005.
- 4.) “The coming fight over Strong Mayor”; Editorial TMH, April 5, 2005.
- 5.) “What would Madison say about Strong Mayor for MDC”; June 12, 2006, submitted To TMH but not published.
- 6.) “County needs strong-mayor government”: TMH, July 20, 2006.
- 7.) “Where’s the Cavalry?”; August 3, 2006, submitted to TMH but not published.
- 8.) “The line between professional lobbyist and influence peddling”: December 28, 2006, submitted to TMH but not published.
- 9.) “Needed change in Miami-Dade County BOCC”; December 28, 2006, submitted to TMH but not published.
- 10.) “Los cambios necesarios en Miami Dade”: TMH, 17 de enero del 2007.
- 11.) “Good government for Miami-Dade”; TMH, January 19, 2007.
- 12.) “Reformas necesarias en el Condado”; ENH, 17 de febrero del 2007.
- 13.) “Let’s reform the County Charter”; TMH, February 12, 2007.
- 14.) “We need genuine Charter reform”; TMH, April 19, 2007.
- 15.) “Fallos del gobierno en Miami-Dade”; ENH, 19 de abril del 2007.

