

Memorandum



Date: May 2, 2014

To: Honorable Chairwoman Rebeca Sosa,
and Members of the Board of County Commissioners

From: Carlos A. Gimenez
Mayor 

Subject: Proposed Charter Amendment Public Meetings

A proposed Charter amendment (Legistar 140307) regarding the Property Appraiser, sponsored by Commissioner Esteban Bovo, is on the agenda for the Board of County Commissioners (Board) meeting on May 6, 2014.

On July 7, 2011, the Board adopted Ordinance 11-44, which states "the County shall hold six public meetings regarding any resolution calling an election on a proposed Home Rule Charter amendment."

Accordingly, my office scheduled seven public meetings so that interested residents would have the opportunity to ask questions, and provide comments on the proposed charter amendment. Attendance at the meetings varied; one had no residents attend and others varied from three up to eight. Present at the meetings were Property Appraiser Lazaro Solis and/or his staff; and staff from my office, the Elections Department, and the County Attorney's Office. Also in attendance was staff from Commissioner Esteban Bovo's office.

Meetings were held at the following locations on the following dates:

- April 3rd – South Dade Regional Library
- April 7th – Miami Beach Regional Library
- April 7th – Milander Center for Arts and Entertainment
- April 9th – West Dade Regional Library
- April 9th – Coral Gables Library
- April 10th – Arcola Lakes Library
- April 15th – North Dade Regional Library

A number of questions and comment were made by residents at these public meeting, including:

- Why this possible charter amendment was being put to the voters;
- The differences between state constitutional officers and charter officers and how Miami-Dade's Property Appraiser functions differed from other counties throughout the state;
- Why the charter amendment would not be implemented until January 1, 2017;
- Why term limits were not included in the proposal;
- The effect of the proposed amendment on the functions and duties of the office, specifically regarding staffing and how current employees would be affected, the collective bargaining and the property assessment process;

- How the budgetary process for the office of the Property Appraiser would be affected in the future, and whether the State would have more control over the office. There were concerns that the State would exert more control over the office;
- Whether the Property Appraiser should be elected in a non-partisan or partisan manner (both positions were recommended);
- Concerns that the proposed amendment would preclude the Property Appraiser from being recalled and recommendation that the recall provision remain; and
- Concern about the ballot language, including the definition of the term "independent officer."

If you need any additional information, please contact Inson Kim, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs at (305) 375-5140.

c: R. A. Cuevas, Jr., County Attorney
Lazaro Solis, Property Appraiser
Penelope Townsley, Supervisor of Elections
Mayor's Office – Senior Staff
Charles Anderson, Commission Auditor
Christopher Agrippa, Clerk of the Board