

Miami-Dade County Charter Review Task Force Agenda
Official Version
Monday, December 1, 2025
10:00 AM
18th Floor Conference Room (18-3)

- I. Roll Call

- II. Pledge of Allegiance

- III. Reasonable Opportunity for the Public to be Heard

- IV. Continuation of Discussion on the Structure of County Government
 - A. Response Related to Qualifying for Election to County Commission
 - B. Response Related to Timing of Vacancy and Subsequent Election

- V. New Topic: Continuation of Discussion on Land Use/ Resilience
 - A. Response Related to County Water & Sewer Department Services Areas
 - B. Regulatory and Economic Resources Department (RER) Staff Recommendations

- VI. Comments/Discussion by Task Force members
 - A. Clerk's Meeting Minutes
 - B. Other Discussion Items

- VII. Adjournment

Attachments:

- (1) Attachment 1: Clerk's Task Force Meeting Minutes for 10.27.2025

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The Miami-Dade Charter Review Task Force (CRTF/Task Force) convened a meeting at the North Dade Regional Library, 2455 NW 183rd Street, Auditorium, Miami Gardens, Florida 33056, on October 27, 2025, at 5:26 p.m.

I. Roll Call

Prior to the Roll Call, Deputy Clerk Jose Soto announced that Senator Alexis Calatayud and Former North Miami Mayor Andre P. Pierre were excused from today's meeting.

The following Task Force members were present at roll call:

- Ms. Stephanie V. Daniels;
- Mr. Eric Eikenberg;
- Ms. Iris Escarra;
- Mr. Rafael E. Granado;
- Mr. José Jimenez;
- Ms. Rebecca Wakefield;
- Former Miami-Dade Commissioner Dennis Moss;
- Vice Chairman Michael D. Redondo (State Representative for House District 118); and
- Chairman Dennis A. Kerbel.

The following Task Force members were absent:

- Town of Miami Lakes Mayor Joshua Dieguez;
- City of Homestead Mayor Steven D. Losner; and
- Former City of Miami Shores Mayor Crystal Wagar

Mr. Robert H. Fernandez arrived at 6:13 p.m.

In addition to the Task Force members, the following staff members were present:

- Assistant County Attorneys (ACA) Mr. Michael Valdez and Sophia Guzzo;
- Mr. Jorge Damian de la Paz, Director of Policy, Office of the Mayor;
- Ms. Samantha Jacob, Deputy Director of Policy, Office of the Mayor;
- Ms. Demetria Henderson, Director of Legislative Affairs, Office of the Mayor;
- Ms. Tivia Rouland, Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs, Office of the Mayor; and
- Mr. José Soto, Deputy Clerk, Clerk of the Board

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II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Dennis A. Kerbel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Listening Session and Reasonable Opportunity for the Public to be heard

Chairman Kerbel opened the reasonable opportunity for the public to be heard and the following individuals came forward to speak:

1. Former Miami-Dade County District 1 Commissioner Barbara Jordan addressed the Task Force regarding term limits for County commissioners. She expressed concern that eight years provided insufficient time for commissioners to meaningfully impact their communities and complete significant projects, noting that she left three funded projects unfinished when her tenure ended. Commissioner Jordan suggested that twelve years was more appropriate and proposed that commissioners could potentially serve two consecutive terms, pause for four years, then return to serve a final term, drawing a parallel to recent presidential election outcomes. She emphasized that commissioners needed adequate time to accomplish substantial community improvements.

Commissioner Jordan also voiced her objections to any proposal to reduce the County's thirteen single-member districts to nine districts with shared representation. She highlighted the historical struggle to establish single-member districts, crediting Betty Ferguson, Carrie Meek, and Javier Suarez for their efforts. She argued that single-member districts provided clear accountability and allowed residents to identify who represented their specific community, whereas shared districts created conflicts of interest and confusion about representation.

Additionally, Commissioner Jordan addressed commissioner salaries, noting the disparity between the Charter-established salary of \$6,000 annually and the actual demands of the position. She detailed the extensive responsibilities of commissioners, including CDMP meetings, zoning meetings, multiple committee assignments, district operations, constituent services, social obligations, and travel to secure federal and state funding. Commissioner Jordan emphasized that commissioners dedicated 65 to 75 percent of their time to the role, making it unrealistic to maintain outside employment. She argued it was unfair to ask financially struggling residents to approve salary increases for elected officials and advocated for a salary commission to establish fair compensation with cost-of-living adjustments, rather than forcing commissioners to advocate for their own pay increases. She concluded by suggesting that without adequate compensation, only retirees or individuals affiliated with firms could realistically serve.

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2. Dr. Phil Ehs, 8962 Southwest 142nd Avenue, Miami, FL; raised questions regarding oversight in elections and inquired about the appropriate contact for election-related information.

ACA Michael Valdes indicated that the Supervisor of Elections could provide the requested information.

3. Ms. Marisol Zenteno, President of the League of Women Voters, 4760 Northwest 173rd Drive, Miami, FL; expressed concern about insufficient public notice for the meeting and stated that residents were satisfied with the current eight-year term limit for commissioners, asserting that two terms provided adequate time for accomplishments.
4. Mr. Kenneth Kilpatrick, President of the Brownsville Civic Neighborhood Association, 3167 Northwest 29th Avenue, Miami, FL; questioned whether the County Charter addressed term limits for commissioners and recall provisions for constitutional officers.

Chairman Kerbel responded that these matters were governed by State law.

5. Mr. Jah Malchizedek (phonetic), representing the Church of Jah, 10539 Southwest 18th Street, Miami, supported the current term limits but advocated for increased commissioner salaries. He also inquired about the status of refugees seeking sanctuary in County churches.

Chairman Kerbel clarified that the refugee sanctuary issue fell outside the purview of the Charter Review Task Force and should be directed to state and federal governments.

Seeing no one else appear wishing to speak, Chairman Kerbel closed the reasonable opportunity to be heard.

Commissioner Dennis Moss addressed the concern regarding public notice and outlined the extensive efforts undertaken by the Task force to publicize its meetings.

Ms. Demetria Henderson confirmed that the County adhered to all required protocols for public meeting notices, including Sunshine Law requirements, and noted that meetings were scheduled on an as-needed basis rather than following a fixed schedule.

Mr. Jorge Damian de la Paz added that the administration conducted targeted outreach efforts through platforms such as social media to inform the public about meetings.

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IV. Continuation of Discussion on the Structure of County Government

A. Motions for Consideration

i. Item A: Moss—Revised Independent Salary Commission

Chairman Kerbel introduced the discussion on the revised Independent Salary Commission proposal, noting that questions remained from the previous meeting regarding potential inclusion of private entities in the decision-making process.

ACA Valdes outlined the modifications made to the proposal since the prior task force meeting which included:

- An added provision in subsection C clarifying that vacancies on the Independent Salary Commission (commission/ISC) would be filled using the same appointment method as the original member's appointment;
- Subsection D was modified to require the commission to meet annually rather than biennially, with meetings scheduled prior to the Board of County Commissioners' (Board) adoption of the county budget for the upcoming fiscal year;
- A requirement that the commission determine whether salary adjustments were warranted before budget adoption;
- A cap provision stating that recommended salaries could exceed the amount determined by state law formula for non-charter county commissioners; and
- Subsection D was clarified to specify that the commission's final report would be presented annually prior to budget adoption, that the commission's determinations would be final, and that the Board would include the revised salaries in the proposed County budget without modifications or amendments

ACA Valdes noted that the commission would consider the value of benefits and other compensation received by commissioners when making determinations.

Commissioner Moss recalled thirteen previous failed attempts to revise commissioner salaries through ballot measures. He emphasized that the current \$6,000 annual salary was unreasonable given the full-time responsibilities of County commissioners and explained that when the charter was initially created, the \$6,000 salary equaled approximately \$60,000 in current value, where commissioners were then considered part-time employees. Commissioner Moss noted that the position's demands had evolved substantially, yet the salary remained unchanged; and proposed establishing an ISC composed of individuals with demonstrated community goodwill who could examine current commissioner salaries and benefits comprehensively, then determine fair and

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equitable compensation. He stressed that the commission's decisions would be final and not subject to modification by the Board.

Commissioner Moss detailed the rationale for selecting specific appointing authorities, offices representing law enforcement and the rule of law, to enhance the commission's credibility and assure the public that appointees would evaluate matters honestly and fairly. He expressed concern that including additional entities in the appointment process might create perceptions of undue influence and noted that commissioners' benefits had expanded over time because alternative mechanisms for adequate compensation were unavailable. Commissioner Moss advocated for the commission to conduct annual reviews and consider all benefits when determining fair compensation, stating that determinations should be incorporated directly into the budget process. He concluded by emphasizing that commissioners needed adequate compensation to support themselves and their families without relying solely on outside income sources.

Ms. Escarra sought clarification on whether the salary revision applied uniformly to all County commissioners, and inquired whether chief judges could serve directly on the commission or were required to designate appointees.

Commissioner Moss confirmed the revision would be applied uniformly and indicated that judges must designate representatives rather than serve personally.

ACA Valdes clarified that designated appointments were required rather than direct service. He explained this applied to other public officials as well, though he needed to review specific code provisions before offering a definitive opinion on certain positions.

Ms. Escarra recommended establishing a minimum base salary for commissioners, suggesting it be tied to minimum wage or average median income.

Ms. Rebecca Wakefield expressed support for the proposal and suggested implementing progressive salary increases over time accompanied by scheduled review processes.

Mr. Eric Eikenberg questioned the absence of provisions addressing outside employment.

ACA Valdes confirmed the item did not address this matter, indicating commissioners would

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remain eligible for outside employment.

Mr. Eikenberg raised concerns about executive benefits for commissioners referenced in Attachment B of the item, noting the benefits totaled approximately \$74,980 annually and significantly exceeded the current \$6,000 salary. He calculated that if the commission recommended the maximum salary authorized under State law for non-charter counties (approximately \$123,000) combined with existing benefits, commissioners could receive nearly \$200,000 in total annual compensation while maintaining outside employment eligibility.

Chairman Kerbel responded that the commission could evaluate benefits as part of their deliberations and confirmed that no State regulations specifically governed this aspect. He reassured Mr. Eikenberg that benefit decisions would remain at the Board's discretion.

Commissioner Moss noted that the current County Charter did not prescribe specific benefits for commissioners, allowing them discretion in determining their benefits.

ACA Valdes added that benefits might be regulated by State law, noting that non-charter counties were governed exclusively by State law provisions, whereas charter counties like Miami-Dade possessed home rule authority.

Vice Chairman Michael D. Redondo opined that voters might not support establishing a minimum salary for commissioners.

Ms. Escarra suggested commissioners could receive starting salaries equivalent to those of firefighters and law enforcement officers.

Chairman Kerbel proposed modifying language in the item's first paragraph but withdrew the suggestion after ACA Valdes explained that ballot question language was limited to 75 words and incorporating additional details would consume word count needed to describe the commission's composition and function.

ACA Valdes emphasized that the proposal should not specify exact salary amounts but instead inform voters that compensation would be adjusted based on the commission's recommendations. He distinguished this approach from previous ballot questions that specified definite salary changes, explaining that this proposal established a different system rather than guaranteeing any

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particular outcome.

Responding to Mr. Eikenberg's request for clarity, ACA Valdes confirmed that the County Charter did not designate whether commissioners were considered part-time employees.

Chairman Kerbel proposed an amendment requiring the commission to conduct at least two public hearings prior to finalizing its review, which Commissioner Moss accepted as a friendly amendment.

ACA Valdes noted that the original language already required at least one public hearing.

Mr. José Jimenez requested that section E's meeting provisions be separated into a distinct paragraph, which would renumber the previous paragraph E as paragraph F.

ACA Valdes confirmed this modification could be incorporated.

In response to Ms. Escarra's question as to what would occur if a proposed salary increase was not approved, ACA Valdes clarified that salaries would remain unchanged, analogizing the situation to the Charter Review Task Force's mandate, if no revisions were deemed necessary, the status quo would prevail.

Mr. Eikenberg recommended that County commissioners be prohibited from maintaining outside employment given the potential for substantial salary increases and comprehensive benefit packages.

Commissioner Moss and ACA Valdes confirmed that research indicated neither charter nor non-charter counties throughout Florida imposed restrictions preventing commissioners from holding outside employment.

Commissioner Moss moved to approve the foregoing proposed item, as amended to include the amendment requiring at least two public hearings and the reorganization of meeting provisions into a separate paragraph as suggested by Mr. Jimenez.. This motion was seconded by Ms. Escarra and upon being put to a vote, passed 9-1 (Mr. Eikenberg voted no; Senator Calatayud, Mayor Pierre, Mayor Dieguez, Mayor Losner, and Mayor Wagar were absent).

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ii Item B: Kerbel—Commissioner Term Limits

Chairman Kerbel introduced the term limits discussion, explaining that he had previously proposed changing commissioner term limits from two four-year terms to three four-year terms, with the restriction applying only to commissioners not in office prior to November 2028. He noted that Mr. Eikenberg had requested a parallel provision for the County Mayor, which appeared on the agenda as Item B-Alternate.

Chairman Kerbel explained his new proposal, Item C, which would establish a merit retention election in commissioners' sixth year of service. Under this mechanism, commissioners seeking a third term would require voter permission from their districts before being allowed to run again. He described this as a solution that would eliminate the need to exclude current commissioners since all candidates for a third term would face voter approval.

Chairman Kerbel invited discussion from task force members.

Mr. Jimenez expressed support for Item B but recommended eliminating the word "consecutive," allowing commissioners to serve three four-year terms total whether consecutively or not. He referenced Commissioner Jordan's earlier testimony suggesting that commissioners could potentially serve two terms, allow their replacement to serve one term, then return for a final term. Mr. Jimenez expressed limited support for third terms but acknowledged their importance if approved. He emphasized that three terms should represent an absolute maximum and questioned why current commissioners were excluded from the proposal.

Mr. Jimenez also noted concerns that the Mayor's office wielded considerably more power than any single commissioner position and cautioned that placing both salary and term limit items on the same ballot would likely result in both measures failing.

Chairman Kerbel acknowledged his intention to have the Task Force vote on which proposal the commission should prioritize based on previous discussions.

Ms. Stephanie Daniels expressed support for Item B and raised concerns about Item C's fiscal impact on taxpayers, questioning whether an additional election would be required to determine if commissioners could seek third terms.

ACA Sophia Guzzo clarified that such an election would coincide with primary elections rather than constituting an independent election, though it might affect district-level turnout.

Mr. Rafael Granado voiced his objections to Item C, arguing it would force commissioners to campaign continuously during their final term and require fundraising every two years, contrary to

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the County's staggered election system designed to avoid perpetual campaigning. He questioned the rationale for excluding currently serving commissioners if the objective was allowing officials to complete their work, and challenged whether the mayor should receive a third term given the office's strong executive authority. Mr. Granado stated his preference for Item A modified to allow three total four-year terms rather than three consecutive terms.

Chairman Kerbel proposed striking the word "consecutive" from Item B.

Commissioner Moss expressed his preference for Item B and echoed concerns expressed by others that placing both salary and term limit measures on the ballot simultaneously would doom both proposals, particularly given recent community controversy regarding term limit changes.

Ms. Wakefield indicated support for Item B and suggested the Task Force recommend placing the salary commission proposal on the 2026 ballot and the term limits proposal on the 2028 ballot to avoid conflicting priorities.

Vice Chairman Redondo assumed chairing the meeting to allow for Chairman Kerbel to move the item.

Chairman Kerbel moved for the Task Force to approve Item B with revisions allowing commissioners to serve three total four-year terms applicable to current commissioners.

ACA Valdes sought clarification on how the three-term lifetime limit would interact with commissioners' existing terms and whether those terms would count toward the new limit. He explained that the Charter currently established term limits only for commissioners elected to full four-year terms, meaning appointees or individuals elected to complete unexpired terms were not subject to the two-term restriction under current provisions.

Extensive discussion ensued regarding how term limits should apply to appointed commissioners or those elected to fill vacancies.

Chairman Kerbel contended that serving more than half of an appointed or vacancy-filled term should count as a complete term toward the three-term limit.

ACA Valdes reviewed the appointment process, noting that appointments typically lasted only until the next Countywide election according to Charter provisions. He distinguished between appointments resulting from resignations and gubernatorial appointments following office suspensions, which operated under different legal frameworks. ACA Valdes referenced specific examples involving Commissioners Gonzalez and Milian Orbis to illustrate various appointment scenarios and their potential implications for term counting.

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Mr. Jimenez initially advocated for provisions preventing commissioners from serving excessively long tenures through appointments but later withdrew his concerns, acknowledging the mathematical complexity and rarity of problematic scenarios.

Vice Chairman Redondo cautioned against establishing rigid numerical year limits, noting that such provisions could create inequities where some commissioners served less than twelve years while others served the full duration. He cited federal and State precedents, including the 22nd Amendment's treatment of presidential succession, which counted any service exceeding half a term against eligibility limits.

Mr. Eikenberg highlighted recent appointments as examples requiring consideration, noting that under certain scenarios commissioners could theoretically serve fifteen to sixteen years.

Following extensive discussions regarding various appointment scenarios and their mathematical implications, Chairman Kerbel modified his motion to request the Task Force to approve Item B as written and strike the word "consecutive" to establish a lifetime limit of three four-year terms regardless of whether served consecutively. He noted the motion eliminated provisions addressing appointments and removed the final sentence restricting application to future commissioners, thereby making the three-term limit applicable to current Board members. This motion was seconded by Ms. Escarra and upon being put to a vote, passed 10-0 (Senator Calatayud, Mayor Pierre, Mayor Dieguez, Mayor Losner, and Mayor Wagar were absent).

iii. Item B- Alternate: Eikenberg—Mayoral and Commissioner Term Limits

Chairman Kerbel invited Mr. Eikenberg to proceed with Item B-Alternate.

Mr. Eikenberg addressed Item B-Alternate, noting that while the strong mayor designation had been previously discussed, some powers originally held by the mayor's office had been transferred to constitutional officers approved by voters. He stated that based on the decision just made regarding commissioner term limits, it was important for parity that the mayor have the ability to serve three terms. Mr. Eikenberg specified he intended to include the word "consecutive," noting that the task force had just approved commissioner term limits without that word, but he proposed three consecutive terms for the mayor as stated in the provision. He moved the item.

Mr. Eikenberg moved that the Task Force approve Item B as outlined. This motion was seconded

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by Vice Chairman Redondo.

Ms. Escarra sought clarification on whether the motion included or excluded the word "consecutive."

Mr. Eikenberg confirmed the motion included "three consecutive."

Responding to Mr. Jimenez's question if the County Mayor could skip a term and run again if the word "consecutive" was removed from the item, Chairman Kerbel indicated this could occur.

ACA Valdes explained that under general election law and prevailing legal precedent, the term "consecutive" when used to describe term limits functioned as a term of art to distinguish such limits from a lifetime ban. He clarified that the Charter's use of "consecutive" represented a deliberate decision establishing an eight-year limit, after which an official could leave office, wait four years, and run again. ACA Valdes noted the State legislature employed similar provisions using "consecutive." He emphasized that altering or removing this term would create practical changes to what applied, and the task force should be mindful that use or non-use of this term carried legal significance.

Mr. Eikenberg sought clarification, questioning ACA Valdes's explanation. He noted it seemed counterintuitive that a provision using the phrase "two consecutive four-year terms" would allow an official to serve two terms, leave office for four years, return to serve additional terms, and still be considered within the "two consecutive" term limit.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Eikenberg and ACA Valdes regarding the legal interpretation of "consecutive" term limits. Mr. Eikenberg expressed concern that the Charter language appeared counterintuitive, as the phrase "two consecutive four-year terms" would permit an official to serve eight years, leave office for four years, then return to serve an additional eight years, totaling sixteen years with an interruption, while still complying with the term limit restriction.

ACA Valdes confirmed this interpretation accurately reflected current Charter provisions and noted the structure paralleled State legislative term limit provisions.

After seeking clarification on whether additional gaps and subsequent terms would be permissible beyond the initial sixteen years, Mr. Eikenberg withdrew his motion.

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iv. Item C: Kerbel—Revised Commissioner Term Limits

Chairman Kerbel opened the floor for discussion on recommendations regarding which question should appear on the ballot and when.

Ms. Wakefield moved that the task force recommend placing the salary commission proposal on the 2026 ballot and the term limits proposal on the 2028 ballot, noting this appeared to be the consensus.

Commissioner Moss offered remarks for the record regarding term limits and elections. He noted that voters effectively determined term limits through the electoral process by retaining or removing officials based on performance. Commissioner Moss observed that the public's perspective on elected officials often did not account for the full scope of their responsibilities and work commitments. He noted that officials dedicated to their communities invested effort comparable to county employees in other departments. Commissioner Moss referenced Commissioner Jordan as an example of sustained commitment to constituents and the County, and expressed optimism that public perception of elected officials would improve over time.

Chairman Kerbel acknowledged the contributions of both Commissioner Moss and Commissioner Jordan to their constituents and the county. He called for a vote on the pending motion.

Hearing no additional discussion, Chairman Kerbel called for a vote.

Ms. Wakefield moved to approve the foregoing proposed item, as presented. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Moss, and upon being put to a vote, passed 10-0 (Senator Calatayud, Mayor Pierre, Mayor Dieguez, Mayor Losner, and Mayor Wagar were absent).

V. Comments/Discussion by Task Force Members

A. Clerk’s Meeting Minutes

Vice Chairman Redondo noted the minutes presented for approval had to be corrected to indicate he served on District 118 instead of District 20.

Vice Chairman Redondo moved to approve the minutes, as corrected. This motion was seconded by Mr. Eikenberg, and upon being put to a vote, passed 10-0 (Senator Calatayud, Mayor Pierre, Mayor Dieguez, Mayor Losner, and Mayor Wagar were absent).

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B. Initial Task Force Report

Chairman Kerbel opened the floor for discussion. There were not any comments about the Initial Task Force Report.

Ms. Daniels moved to approve the Initial Task Force Report, as presented. This motion was seconded by Ms. Escarra, and upon being put to a vote, passed 10-0 (Senator Calatayud, Mayor Pierre, Mayor Dieguez, Mayor Losner, and Mayor Wagar were absent).

In response to Chairman Kerbel's inquiry regarding when the report would be presented to the Board, Mr. de la Paz indicated that staff was consulting with the resolution's sponsor to determine an appropriate Board agenda date.

C. Other Discussion Items

Chairman Kerbel announced the next task force meeting would be held on November 17, 2025, at the Stephen P. Clark Building, second floor County Commission Chamber, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; and requested input on scheduling a regional meeting in December 2025.

Ms. Henderson reported that three tentative December dates were under consideration pending confirmation from the sponsoring commissioner's office. She indicated that locations in the City of Homestead or the Town of Cutler Bay, both in County District 8, were being evaluated for a December 19, 2025 meeting. Ms. Henderson also noted her office was exploring potential January 2026 meeting dates at the Commission Chambers.

Discussion ensued among the Trust members and staff regarding scheduling options for future meetings.

Mr. Jimenez moved to schedule the next task force meeting for Monday, December 1, 2025, at the Commission Chambers at 9:00 a.m. Vice Chairman Redondo seconded the motion, and upon being put to a vote, passed 10-0 (Senator Calatayud, Mayor Pierre, Mayor Dieguez, Mayor Losner, and Mayor Wagar were absent).

Chairman Kerbel requested that meeting dates be identified for January through April 2026, with a regional meeting in the western area during January 2026 and a regional meeting in the southern area during February 2026. He indicated he would coordinate with the sponsor of the resolution establishing the CRTF to request an extension through April 2026. Chairman Kerbel noted that scheduling details could be further discussed at the November 17, 2025 meeting.

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VI. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Miami-Dade County Charter Review Task Force, the meeting was adjourned at 7:28 p.m.