

**Miami-Dade County Charter Review Task Force Agenda
Preliminary Version
Tuesday, April 7, 2026 at 10:00am
Stephen P. Clark Center, Commission Chambers**

- I. Roll Call

- II. Pledge of Allegiance

- III. Reasonable Opportunity for the Public to be Heard

- IV. Continuation of Discussion Items
 - A. Annexation/Incorporation
 - B. Article 7
 - C. Recommended Charter Revisions As Adopted

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

- VI. Adjournment

Attachments

Attachment A: Motion for Consideration – Establishing Boundary Commission
Attachment B: Clerk's Meeting Minutes 2.23.26

**Kerbel – Establishing Boundary Commission
for Annexation and Incorporations
(Including Jimenez Motion Codifying Survey of
Property Owners in Annexation Process)**

SECTION 6.04. - CHANGES IN MUNICIPAL BOUNDARIES.

- A. The planning director shall study municipal boundaries with a view to recommending their orderly adjustment, improvement, and establishment. Proposed boundary changes may be initiated by the ~~[[Planning Advisory Board]]~~ >>Boundary Commission<<, the Board of County Commissioners, the governing body of a municipality, or by a petition of any person or group concerned.
- B. >>All applications for municipal boundary changes initiated by the governing body of a municipality or by a petition of any person or group concerned shall be reviewed by the Boundary Commission.
1. The Boundary Commission shall be comprised of fifteen (15) members who shall serve without compensation. Each member of the Boundary Commission must be a County resident and shall hold such other qualifications as determined by the Board of County Commissioners, but no member may be a current elected official, County employee, registered lobbyist, or immediate family member of a sitting County Commissioner. One member shall be appointed by the County Mayor; one member shall be appointed by the League of Cities; and the remaining thirteen (13) members shall be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, one member per district commissioner. The members of the Boundary Commission shall serve for a term of five (5) years commencing on January 1, 2027 and each five years thereafter. Any vacancies on the Boundary Commission shall be filled in the same manner as provided for the relevant member's appointment. The Board of County Commissioners may, by ordinance, prescribe such other duties or procedures relating to the Boundary Commission except as otherwise provided in this Charter.
 2. Applications initiated by petition shall comply with the requirements for approval of the form of a petition, the time to obtain signatures, and the number, classification, and certification of signatures to be obtained set forth in Section 6.05.

3. All such applications submitted during the five-year term of the Boundary Commission shall be reviewed collectively, and the Boundary Commission shall issue a final report at the conclusion of its term that shall include recommendations as to all such applications and any municipal boundary changes recommended by the Boundary Commission. The Boundary Commission must hold at least one (1) public hearing prior to finalizing its review and shall establish its own review schedule with deadlines for submission of such applications to ensure adequate time for collective review and public hearing prior to the conclusion of the Boundary Commission's term. Any applications submitted after such deadline shall be reviewed during the Boundary Commission's next five-year term. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Board of County Commissioners may order the Boundary Commission to review any such application(s) and provide a recommendation on an earlier schedule by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Board present.

4. << The Board of County Commissioners, after obtaining the approval of the municipal governing bodies concerned, after hearing the recommendations of the ~~[[Planning Advisory Board]]~~ >>Boundary Commission<<, and after a public hearing, may by ordinance effect boundary changes, with an affirmative vote of the members of the Board of County Commissioners. >>For proposed changes that involve the annexation or separation of an area with 250 or less resident electors, the County shall prepare and mail a survey to each property owner within the proposed boundary change area to ascertain whether each such property owner is in favor of or against the proposed boundary change, and the results of such survey shall be presented to the Board prior to public hearing on any municipal boundary change.<< In making such decision, the Board shall consider whether commercial areas are included in the boundaries of the proposed area to be annexed for the mere benefit of increasing the tax base of the annexing municipality >>and the results of any applicable survey of property owners<<. Changes that involve the annexation or separation of an area of which more than 250 residents are electors shall also require an affirmative vote of a majority of those electors voting. Upon any such boundary change any conflicting boundaries set forth in the charter of such municipality shall be considered amended.

C. No municipal boundary shall be altered except as provided by this Section.

SECTION 6.05. - CREATION OF NEW MUNICIPALITIES.

- A. The Board of County Commissioners and only the Board may authorize the creation of new municipalities in the unincorporated areas of the county after hearing the recommendations of the ~~[[Planning Advisory Board]]~~ >>Boundary Commission<<, after a public hearing, and after an affirmative vote of a majority of the electors voting and residing within the proposed boundaries. The Board of County Commissioners shall appoint a charter commission, consisting of five electors residing within the proposed boundaries, who shall propose a charter to be submitted to the electors in the manner provided in Section 6.03. The new municipality shall have all the powers and rights granted to or not withheld from municipalities by this Charter and the Constitution and general laws of the State of Florida. Notwithstanding any provision of this Charter to the contrary, with regard to any municipality created after September 1, 2000, the pre-agreed conditions between the County and the prospective municipality which are included in the municipal charter can only be changed if approved by an affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of the members of the Board of County Commissioners then in office, prior to a vote of qualified municipal electors.
- B. A new municipality may also be created by petition of electors residing in the area to be incorporated in accordance with the following process:
1. An incorporation committee composed of a minimum of five (5) electors from the proposed area of incorporation will initiate the process by filing with the Clerk of the ~~[[Circuit Court]]~~ >>Board<< an initiatory petition on a form prescribed by the Clerk for such purpose. The form shall identify the names and addresses of the Incorporation Committee members and describe the proposed incorporation area. The form of the petition shall prominently state that a budgetary analysis and a copy of the proposed charter will be distributed to the electors within the area and made available, as required by this section. Within seven (7) days of receipt of the form, the Clerk will determine if the form is acceptable and if it is acceptable shall approve the form of petition and provide the Incorporation Committee the total number of the electors within the proposed incorporation area and the number of required signatures which shall be equal to ~~[[twenty]]~~ >>ten<< percent (~~[[20]]~~ >>10<<%) of the electors in the proposed incorporation area and shall notify the Board of County Commissioners. >>The

department of planning shall also provide the Incorporation Committee with a list of all non-residential property by address and folio number in the proposed incorporation area.<<

If the Clerk determines that the form of petition does not comply with the requirements of this Charter or inaccurately describes proposed boundaries, the Clerk may disapprove the form of petition and provide notification to the Incorporation Committee and the Board of County Commissioners of the disapproval. The Clerk shall advise the Incorporation Committee as to the reasons for disapproval and the Incorporation Committee may submit a new petition at any time. If the Clerk approves the form of the petition, the Incorporation Committee, within ninety (90) days of such approval, shall submit to the Board of County Commissioners a proposed municipal charter, which, at a minimum, shall set forth the form of government and governing body of the newly incorporated area as well as provide for the conditions for incorporation as set forth in [Section 6.05\(B\)\(7\)](#) below. During such ninety (90) day period, the incorporation committee shall hold at least three public hearings on the proposed municipal charter, in three different locations in the area proposed to be incorporated, notice of which shall be mailed to all electors within the area proposed for incorporation.

2.

- (a) ~~[[No later than ninety (90) days from the date of]]~~ >>After<< approval of the above form by the Clerk, the ~~[[Board of County Commissioners]]~~ >>Boundary Commission<< shall review the appropriateness of the petition for incorporation and proposed municipal charter >>as part of its collective review of all applications of municipal boundary changes submitted during its term<< and recommend any changes to the boundaries of the proposed municipality and proposed municipal charter to the Incorporation Committee ~~[[at a public hearing]]~~>>as part of its final report during that respective term. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the Board of County Commissioners may order the Boundary Commission to review any such petition(s) and provide a recommendation on an earlier schedule by a two-thirds vote of the members of the Board present<<.

- (b) ~~[[At such public hearing,]]~~ >> After receiving the recommendations of the Boundary Commission regarding any incorporation petition, << the Board of County Commissioners shall >>, at a public hearing no later than 90 days following the issuance of the Boundary Commission's recommendation, << approve the proposed incorporation petition, as presented in the petition or as revised by the Incorporation Committee, or reject the incorporation petition as presented or as revised by the Incorporation Committee.
- (c) The County Commission's failure to review the incorporation petition within the time required by this paragraph is subject to mandamus by a court of competent jurisdiction.
3. The Incorporation Committee will have ~~[[six]]~~ >> twelve << (~~[[6]]~~ >> 12 <<) months from the date by which the Board was required to have reviewed the incorporation petition to obtain >> (a) << signatures equal to ~~[[twenty]]~~ >> ten << percent (~~[[20]]~~ >> 10 <<%) of the electors in the proposed incorporation area, with signatures on a petition provided by the Clerk >>, and (b) signatures of non-residential property owners equal to ten percent (10%) of the total area of non-residential property in the proposed incorporation area, with signatures on a petition provided by the Clerk <<. >> For signatures of electors, << [[7]] >> t << he petition shall require the name, address and signature of the elector and such signatures shall be notarized. >> For signatures of non-residential property owners, the petition shall require the name and signature of the property owner and a list of all parcels in the proposed incorporated area owned by such property owner, and such signatures shall be notarized. <<
4. >> For petitions signed by electors, << [[7]] >> t << he signed petitions will be submitted to the Supervisor of Elections, who shall [[have thirty (30) days to]] canvass the signatures contained therein >> in accordance with state law <<. >> For petitions signed by non-residential property owners, the signed petitions will be submitted to the department of planning, who shall verify that the listed parcels constitute ten percent (10%) or more of the total area of non-residential property in the proposed incorporation area. The Board of County Commissioners may, by ordinance, establish additional procedures for the submission and verification of

signatures by non-residential property owners in the proposed incorporation area.<<

5. Upon certification of the sufficiency of the signatures on the petition >>by both the Supervisor of Elections and the department of planning<<, the >>Clerk of the Board<< [[Supervisor of Elections]] shall present the petition to the Board of County Commissioners at their next regularly scheduled meeting. After conducting a public hearing at such meeting, the Board of County Commissioners shall decide whether or not to call an election to authorize the creation of a city and approve a municipal charter for the proposed municipality. If the Board decides to call an election to authorize the creation of the municipality and approve the municipal charter, such election shall occur no sooner than ninety (90) and no greater than one hundred twenty (120) days from the date >>both<< the Supervisor of Elections >>and department of planning<< certify >>y<<[[ies]] the signatures >>or at the earliest possible time thereafter that the Supervisor of Elections has confirmed availability to conduct such election<<. The election shall be held, whenever practicable, in conjunction with another election scheduled to occur within the prescribed time period. The election shall be decided by an affirmative vote of a majority of electors voting in the proposed incorporation area.
6. During the sixty (60) days following the certification of the petition, the Board shall complete a budgetary analysis in cooperation with the Incorporation Committee of and on the proposed incorporation area and schedule at least one public hearing prior to the incorporation election. The budgetary analysis, including a response by the incorporation committee if submitted, shall be provided to the resident electors of the proposed municipality by mail and shall be made available at locations within the proposed municipality. The proposed municipal charter shall be made available at locations within the proposed municipality and made available electronically. Such budgetary analysis shall at a minimum estimate all of the identifiable revenues generated by the proposed incorporation area prior to incorporation, and present the operating expenses of comparable small, medium and large municipalities providing typical municipal services.

7. The new municipality shall have all the powers and rights granted to or not withheld from municipalities by the County Home Rule Charter and the Constitution and general laws of the State of Florida; provided, however, any proposed municipality whose boundaries include any area outside the urban development boundary, as may be described in the County's Comprehensive Development Master Plan, shall abide by the permitted uses as set forth in such plan. It is further provided, as a condition of incorporation, that the new municipality shall provide in its charter: to remain a part of the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue District, to remain a part of the Miami-Dade Library System, to contract with the Miami-Dade County Sheriff for local patrol police services for a minimum of three years, for Miami-Dade County to retain authority for residential garbage and refuse collection and disposal within the proposed new municipality, and for the payment, assumption, or other satisfaction for that portion of the County's preexisting debts and obligations or other refundings secured by revenues or taxes collected within the proposed municipality's area and that neither the new municipality nor its electors shall take any action that would adversely affect the County's bond or other debt obligations that are secured by taxes or revenues from the area constituting the new municipality.

**CLERK'S SUMMARY OF MINUTES
CHARTER REVIEW TASK FORCE
FEBRUARY 23, 2026**

The Miami-Dade Charter Review Task Force (CRTF/Task Force) convened its meeting at the Westchester Regional Library Auditorium, Miami, 9445 Coral Way, Miami, Florida 33165, on February 23, 2026, at 5:30 p.m.

Chairman Kerbel convened the meeting at 5:55 p.m. and made introductory remarks.

I. Roll Call

The following Task Force members were present at roll call:

- Town of Miami Lakes Mayor Joshua Dieguez;
- Mr. Eric Eikenberg;
- Ms. Iris Escarra;
- Mr. Jose Jimenez;
- City of Homestead Mayor Steven D. Losner;
- Ms. Rebecca Wakefield;
- Former Miami-Dade Commissioner Dennis Moss; and
- Chairman Dennis A. Kerbel

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

- Assistant County Attorneys (ACA) Sophia Guzzo and Michael Valdes;
- Ms. Demetria Henderson, Director of Legislative Affairs, Office of the Mayor;
- Mr. Jorge Damian de la Paz, Director of Policy, Office of the Mayor;
- Ms. Tivia Rouland, Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs, Office of the Mayor;
- Mr. Jorge Fernandez, Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget (OMB);
- Mr. Alejandro Zizold, Chief of Planning, Research & Grants, Miami-Dade County Parks, Recreation & Open Spaces (PROS);
- Ms. Barbara Galvez, Chief Administrative Officer, Miami-Dade County Clerk of Court and Comptroller; and
- Ms. Flora Garcia, Deputy Clerk, Miami-Dade County Clerk of Court and Comptroller, Clerk of the Board (COB)
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II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Kerbel led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Chairman Kerbel opened the listening session and reasonable opportunity for the public to be heard; and the following person appeared before the Task Force:

1. Ms. Susan Khoury, 8724 SW 72nd Street, Miami, Florida, spoke on matters relating to the constitutional officers. She raised three concerns she believed warranted review,

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either at the Charter level or through state action: the absence of term limits for constitutional officers, the lack of a residency requirement for candidates seeking those offices, and the fact that the constitutional officers, who collectively administered approximately half of the County's budget, were not subject to oversight by the Miami-Dade County Inspector General. She noted that she had already raised these issues with state legislators and suggested that, if necessary, a separate state Inspector General position could be created to address financial oversight. She urged the Task Force to consider whether any of these matters could be incorporated into the Charter before the next review cycle.

Chairman Kerbel acknowledged her comments and clarified that the County's authority over constitutional officers was significantly constrained by state law, making these matters largely a state-level issue.

Seeing no one else come forward wishing to speak, Chairman Kerbel closed the listening session and the reasonable opportunity for the public to be heard.

IV. Presentations from Staff

A. Annexation/Incorporation

Mr. Fernandez presented a PowerPoint presentation on the history, purpose, and processes of annexations and incorporations, including relevant Charter requirements, Charter revisions, Code requirements, recent Code revisions, and past Board actions. He emphasized that incorporation represented the most complex policy issue in Miami-Dade County, as it required balancing residents' desire for self-determination and self-governance with the need to preserve services for the remainder of the unincorporated area. Mr. Fernandez noted that the Miami-Dade County Home Rule Amendment and Charter was adopted in 1957, granting the County authority over annexation and incorporation matters.

Mr. Fernandez stated that Article 6 of the Charter established the guidelines and requirements for annexations and incorporations. He explained that Section 6.04 governed changes to municipal boundaries, and that Section 6.05 addressed the creation of new municipalities, which could only be established following BCC approval, advisory board reviews, and a majority vote of the electors within the proposed area.

Mr. Fernandez reviewed the incorporation by petition process, which had been placed into the Charter through a previous Charter amendment. He explained that under that process, an incorporation committee of at least five members was required to file a petition with the Clerk, obtain signatures from 20% of resident electors, draft a proposed charter, hold at least three public hearings, and submit the materials to the Board, which then had the authority to approve or reject the proposal. He noted that the Supervisor of Elections was required to verify the petition signatures, and that if signatures were deemed sufficient, the BCC could call an election; if a majority approved, a budgetary analysis was conducted and a vote on the proposed charter followed.

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Mr. Fernandez reviewed recent changes to Chapter 20 of the Code, including expanded notice requirements adopted in 2022 mandating that all registered voters within the proposed area, property owners within the proposed area and within 600 feet, and neighboring municipalities receive notice of an annexation proposal. He further noted that for proposed annexations with fewer than 250 resident electors, the County was required to conduct a survey of affected property owners to determine whether they wished to be included in the annexing municipality.

Mr. Fernandez noted that a 2014 BCC action had reduced the petition signature requirement from 25% to 20% and had also removed the boundaries committee. He also advised that the most recent BCC action, taken in February 2025 through Ordinance 25-13, suspended consideration of incorporations for two years and annexations for four years, with limited exceptions.

Mr. Fernandez reviewed the mitigation requirements, explaining that since 2000, three municipalities, Miami Lakes, Palmetto Bay, and Doral, had been non-revenue neutral at the time of incorporation and were therefore required to make mitigation payments to the County. He noted that each had negotiated a seven-year payoff period, after which their obligations were satisfied and their charters amended accordingly.

Mr. Fernandez stated that at the time of Charter adoption the County had 26 municipalities, with approximately 35% of the population residing in UMSA. He noted that the County currently had 34 municipalities, with approximately 43% of the population, roughly 1.2 million residents residing in UMSA.

Mr. Fernandez advised that there had been two attempts to incorporate the unincorporated area, one in 1997 and another in April 2012, and that both had failed to move forward. He noted that there was currently no policy requiring the incorporation of the remaining unincorporated area within any specific timeframe, and briefly distinguished Miami-Dade's situation from Broward County, which lacked a home rule charter and had been required by the State to incorporate its unincorporated areas.

Mr. Fernandez highlighted the services and revenues retained by the County when an area was annexed or incorporated, including fire rescue services, the County library system, garbage and refuse collection, and the utility taxes and franchise fees securing existing County bond indebtedness. He also provided financial information on UMSA's General Fund, noting that UMSA's total budget was approximately \$730 million, and walked through examples illustrating how OMB conducted revenue neutrality analyses, including how revenues and police service costs were attributed to a proposed area.

Discussion ensued among Task Force members and Mr. Fernandez regarding the revenue neutrality analysis methodology.

In response to Chairman Kerbel's question regarding the impact of the police department's transition to a constitutional office on the revenue analysis, Mr. Fernandez replied that the organizational change had not affected OMB's methodology, as his office continued to collaborate effectively with the Sheriff's Office to obtain the necessary data. He explained that

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the same formula was applied, using total calls for service, crime rates, population, and square miles within UMSA to estimate police service costs for a proposed area.

Commissioner Moss commended Mr. Fernandez for his longstanding work on incorporation matters.

In response to Commissioner Moss's question regarding service costs, Mr. Fernandez responded that costs were associated with the level and type of services requested by petitioners. When asked whether he was aware of any studies comparing the quality of services provided by municipalities versus the County, Mr. Fernandez advised that he was not aware of any specific study but noted that incorporation decisions ultimately turned on what level of service a community wanted and what it was willing to pay for.

Commissioner Moss requested that Mr. Fernandez research and distribute to Task Force members two studies, if available: one comparing service quality between municipalities and the County, and another comparing tax rates in areas incorporated from 1990 to present, examining County versus municipal rates.

In response to Commissioner Moss's inquiry regarding whether signature petitions for incorporation had ever been successfully brought before the Board, Mr. Fernandez advised that for annexations, petitions were required to include the requisite percentage of signatures from registered electors when the proposed area contained more than 250 resident electors. He noted that he could not speak to the period before 2000 but confirmed that all incorporations from Miami Lakes forward had proceeded under the direction of the County Commission.

Commissioner Moss observed that no resident-initiated incorporation petition had ever succeeded in Miami-Dade County and that all successful incorporations had been Commission-initiated. He spoke on the barriers facing parties interested in pursuing incorporation, specifically the difficulty of obtaining signatures from 20–25% of resident electors and the financial resources required to complete the process.

Commissioner Moss then inquired about the rationale for limiting participation in annexation votes to eligible registered voters within the proposed area, to the exclusion of business owners.

Mr. Fernandez deferred to the County Attorney's office on that question.

ACA Valdes advised that there were constitutional concerns with expanding the right to vote to property owners who were not registered voters, noting that voting rights in referenda were typically reserved for registered voters residing within the area. He further noted that practical questions, such as how to apportion votes among property owners, whether by parcel or by some proportional measure, would also need to be resolved.

Discussion ensued between Commissioner Moss and ACA Valdes regarding voting rights and the constitutional concerns associated with allowing property owners to participate in annexation and incorporation votes.

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In response to Commissioner Moss's question, ACA Valdes affirmed that most annexations within the State of Florida were under the control of the State.

In response to Commissioner Moss's follow-up question regarding whether the State of Florida had any provisions allowing property owners, rather than registered voters, to participate in such decisions, ACA Valdes clarified that US Supreme Court precedent held that local governments were subdivisions of the State and subject to its authority. As such, any popular vote on such matters would be at the State's discretion rather than by requirement, meaning the State could theoretically annex, incorporate, or adjust territory without the consent of those affected. ACA Valdes further advised that he was not aware of any instances in Florida where the State legislature had allowed property owners, as distinct from registered voters, to participate in such a process.

Mr. Fernandez clarified that for proposed annexation areas with fewer than 250 resident electors, the County was required to conduct a property owner survey, which the Chairman noted was advisory in nature and could be disregarded by the Board.

In response to questions from Mr. Jimenez, Mr. Fernandez advised that the annexation of the Dolphin Mall area to the City of Sweetwater had required a vote as the proposed area contained more than 250 resident electors, and that the proposed annexation area along NW 54th to 74th Street contained no resident voters. He also clarified that the County was not involved in determining district boundaries.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Jimenez and Mr. Fernandez regarding signature requirements for proposed annexation areas.

Mr. Jimenez noted the difficulty of developing a workable formula to expand voting rights and the time required to survey an area.

Mr. Fernandez advised that the County had conducted only one property owner survey in the history of annexations and had received responses from approximately 40 to 50 percent of landowners.

Mr. Jimenez questioned the effect on a municipal budget when the County retained franchise fees and utility taxes in their entirety.

Mr. Fernandez advised that the Code required the County to retain those revenues to cover debt service obligations, though he acknowledged the Code could be amended. He noted that municipalities had historically accepted this arrangement as standard practice and had never raised objections to it. He stated that UMSA's debt service rate was currently 1.9 mills, with approximately two to three municipalities below that rate and the remainder above it, depending on their level of services, and offered to provide that information to the Task Force.

Discussion ensued between Mr. Jimenez and Mr. Fernandez regarding the division of services when a municipality annexes an area.

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Mayor Dieguez expressed objection to the County's moratorium on incorporations and annexations, particularly in cases where municipalities were seeking to annex adjacent commercial areas to provide property tax relief to their residents, citing the City of Miami Springs as an example. He noted that such applications could serve the additional purpose of diversifying a municipality's tax base. Mayor Dieguez stated that he understood the rationale for excluding business owners from the vote, as most did not reside within the proposed annexation area. He recommended that the County reconsider its moratorium to preserve residents' right to self-determination, and noted that members of the Palm Springs North community had expressed interest in annexation to Miami Lakes.

Discussion ensued between Chairman Kerbel and ACA Valdes regarding how best to address the issue of voting rights in the context of annexations and incorporations.

In response to Chairman Kerbel's invitation, a representative from the Miami-Dade Sheriff's Office advised that the department's transition to a constitutional office had not changed the associated budget costs, as the requirements and personnel costs remained the same and continued to be submitted through the same application processes.

Task Force members discussed with the Sheriff's Office representative the assignment of police officers to municipalities and the chain of command. The representative clarified that day-to-day operations for municipalities had not changed, and that majors and officers assigned to a municipality operated under the direction of that municipality for daily functions. She explained that for administrative purposes, such as facilitating personnel matters, transfers, and resource allocation, police majors fell under the Sheriff's Office table of organization. Mayor Dieguez confirmed this characterization, noting that while majors and officers remained within the Sheriff's organizational structure, they took direction from the municipality's town manager and council for operational matters.

Commissioner Moss advised that his support for incorporations had developed after concluding that municipalities were better positioned to provide higher levels of service to their residents. He expressed concern, however, about annexations in which incorporated cities targeted commercial properties, the primary tax base, leaving insufficient revenue for future incorporation efforts in surrounding unincorporated areas.

In response to Chairman Kerbel's question regarding whether the voting rights framework should apply differently to incorporations versus annexations, Commissioner Moss indicated that the issue of business owner participation had been more pronounced in annexations than incorporations during his time in office. He expressed support for continuing the survey process for proposed annexation areas and suggested that alternative approaches to the incorporation process warranted discussion, given that no resident-initiated petition had ever succeeded. He reflected that communities deserved the opportunity to at least vote on whether they wished to incorporate, and noted the positive results he had observed in areas that had done so.

Chairman Kerbel noted that he was still developing a proposal on a related issue to bring forward at a future meeting.

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Ms. Wakefield commented that Commissioner Moss's remarks raised the question of what would happen to areas left behind as incorporations and annexations proceeded, particularly those that no municipality wished to absorb. Using the High Pines and Little Gables situation as an example, she suggested the County should consider how to approach incorporations and annexations with an eye toward avoiding isolated, underserved pockets, and noted that revenue neutrality alone may not be the right framework for addressing that concern.

Commissioner Moss responded that this had been precisely his position, that if a city sought to annex a desirable area such as High Pines, it should also be required to take on adjacent areas like Little Gables. He noted that cities naturally sought to annex high-value commercial properties to strengthen their tax base, but that doing so at the expense of the surrounding unincorporated area left those areas with diminished revenue and a reduced level of services.

In response to Chairman Kerbel's question regarding whether the Task Force wished to address non-electoral input through the Charter, Mr. Jimenez stated that while he had raised the issue for discussion, he had concluded it was too complicated to address through Charter language and would be better suited to Chapter 20 of the Code. He stated that the more important priority was addressing the creation of enclaved areas, and recommended that the Charter include language expressly prohibiting incorporations or annexations from creating enclaves. He cited the situation of Little Gables, surrounded on all sides by incorporated cities yet remaining unincorporated, as an example of the operational inefficiencies such enclaves created for fire rescue and other emergency services.

Chairman Kerbel indicated that he favored a more minimal approach, ensuring that the Code contained a mandatory mechanism to assess the impacts of incorporation and annexation proposals on non-residential electors and non-electors, and that the existing survey process be preserved and protected from repeal.

Mr. Jimenez elaborated on his support for requiring surveys of non-resident property owners, noting that commercial property owners often had deep ties to an area, paying taxes and operating businesses there long before incorporation, and deserved to be consulted on decisions that would affect them. He proposed that the survey requirement be elevated from the Code into the Charter, and that it explicitly require non-resident property owners to be surveyed.

Chairman Kerbel directed that this issue be placed on the next Task Force agenda and that the County Attorney's office provide its opinion.

Mayor Losner expressed his personal view that the public's interest in annexation and incorporation reflected concern about the County's ability to maintain service levels in certain areas and a broader question of confidence in County government. He noted that Pinecrest, Cutler Bay, and Palmetto Bay had been able to cherry-pick favorable areas when incorporating. He also raised the possibility of increasing the voter approval threshold for annexation and incorporation from 50% to 60%, suggesting that a higher threshold would ensure broader consensus and reduce the risk of a narrow majority imposing a new tax burden on non-resident property owners.

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Discussion ensued among Task Force members regarding the inclusion of certain areas in incorporations and the challenge of achieving revenue neutrality.

Commissioner Moss reiterated that the issue was not the quality of County services per se, but rather that the County was not structurally designed to deliver the kind of localized, city-level services that municipalities could provide. He drew on his experience representing Commission District 9 to illustrate the difference, and stated that he would not object to representing an area that included a challenging neighborhood like Leisure City, as he believed such areas could be improved under the right governance structure.

Mayor Losner raised an additional concern regarding changing dynamics in South Dade, particularly the proliferation of high-density developments along the US 1 corridor that were at least partially non-taxable yet would generate significant demand for police and fire services. He cautioned that this trend, combined with any prohibition on enclaving, could effectively stall future incorporation and annexation efforts in the area due to an insufficient tax base relative to service demands, and characterized this as a growing layer of financial risk for the County.

Discussion ensued between Chairman Kerbel and Mayor Losner regarding the financial implications of high-density development in South Dade.

Chairman Kerbel advised that he was inclined against overly prescriptive Charter recommendations given the complexity of the legislative issues involved, and directed the County Attorney's office to provide additional information at the next Task Force meeting.

Hearing no further discussion on the matters of incorporation and annexation, the Task Force proceeded to the next agenda item.

B. Article 7

Mr. Zibold presented a PowerPoint presentation on the Miami-Dade Parks Department, its governance, and Article 7. He explained that the department operated under a two-tier system, providing park services at a regional level for the County's 2.8 million residents and at a local level for the 1.4 million residents of UMSA, with area-wide parks such as Crandon Park and greenway trails serving the broader county population, and smaller neighborhood and mini parks serving local communities.

Mr. Zibold described the department's mission to create outstanding experiences to enhance the quality of life for the community and its vision to connect people and parks for life, noting that the department served 2.8 million county residents, 1.4 million UMSA residents, and approximately 27 million county visitors annually. He highlighted the department's significant scale, noting that it was the first nationally accredited park system of its size in the country, operating more than 300 parks across 40,000 acres, 60 recreation centers, and over 70 miles of beach. He noted that the department's aquatic facilities and marinas served hundreds of thousands of residents annually, and that Zoo Miami alone drew close to 1 million visitors per year, contributing \$20 million directly to the County and generating an estimated \$464 million in broader economic impact.

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Mr. Zibold described the three guiding policy documents governing the department's operations: 1. Article 7 of the Charter, 2. the Comprehensive Development Master Plan, including its Recreation and Open Space element, and 3. the Parks Open Space Master Plan, the vision and guiding principles of which were adopted by the BCC and incorporated into the Recreation and Open Space element.

Mr. Zibold reviewed the history of Article 7, explaining that its provisions were originally adopted in 1993 as Article 6 of the Charter through a citizen-initiated petition, commonly known as the Save Our Parks Amendment, in response to growing pressure during the 1980s and 1990s to develop parkland for commercial purposes, including proposals for hotels, nightclubs, and housing. He noted that the provisions were renumbered to Article 7 in the early 2000s, and that a 2012 referendum, requiring a two-thirds majority for approval, resulted in amendments allowing libraries within parks, exempting the original soccer park from Article 7 restrictions, and enhancing protections for certain reserved lands. He further noted that in 2022, the BCC established a rule requiring a supermajority for county ballot questions related to Article 7, aimed at ensuring broader consensus for proposed changes. He stated that Article 7 protected land acquired for park purposes, required that all uses within parkland serve a public park purpose, and prohibited the commercialization of parks, and noted that it was the only County department to have had a separate referendum unanimously approved by the public to set standards for how parks were planned, developed, and stewarded.

Chairman Kerbel asked whether any Parks Department projects had encountered difficulties due to restrictions imposed by Article 7, referencing the Metro Zoo as one past example.

Mr. Zibold responded that Article 7 was functioning as intended and aligned with the community's wishes, ensuring that parks were protected in perpetuity and that non-park uses and commercialization were prevented. He advised that the department had no recommendations for revisions to Article 7.

Ms. Escarra raised concerns about the potential impact of State-level property tax changes on parks funding, noting that the department represented one of the County's largest budget areas and could be significantly affected. She referenced media reports about the County considering parking fees at parks as a revenue measure and asked what alternative funding opportunities, such as bed tax revenues or other dedicated sources; might be available to sustain park services. Mr. Zibold acknowledged that funding had always been a challenge for the department and that current conditions had made it more pressing. He noted that the department was exploring the possibility of establishing a dedicated funding source for parks and continued to pursue partnerships with other agencies to support services and park development, all within the constraints of Article 7.

Ms. Escarra encouraged Mr. Zibold to review Article 7, relevant studies, and available opportunities to identify areas where the Task Force might be able to provide assistance, and asked that the department return with information on its financial needs and possible options the Task Force could recommend to address them.

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In response to Ms. Escarra's questions regarding utilities on parkland, Mr. Zibold clarified that underground utilities did not generally present an issue under Article 7. He noted that above-ground utilities were permitted under Article 7's exceptions, provided they primarily served park facilities, citing pump stations as a common example.

Discussion ensued among Chairman Kerbel, Ms. Escarra, and Mr. Zibold regarding how the department determined whether a proposed utility met that standard, with Mr. Zibold explaining that the department worked directly with utility providers to assess the scope and reach of their service.

Mr. Eikenberg noted that the Task Force had previously identified certain outdated references within Article 7, such as the designation of "Metro Zoo" rather than "Zoo Miami", that were already being addressed through a practical amendment.

In response to Mr. Eikenberg's question regarding the current total amount of deferred maintenance for county parks, Mr. Zibold advised that he did not have the precise figure available but acknowledged it was substantial, noting that the department managed more than 300 parks with aging infrastructure and was working with OMB to identify resources to address those needs. He committed to providing the exact figure at a later time.

In response to a question regarding the Parks Advisory Board, Mr. Zibold confirmed that a Citizens Parks Advisory Board existed. The Task Force member suggested it could be useful to hear from the Advisory Board, as strong advocates for county parks, regarding any recommendations they might have for Article 7.

Chairman Kerbel asked that the Parks Advisory Board be invited to the Task Force's next meeting at County Hall to share its perspective and any suggestions it wished to offer.

Ms. Escarra asked Mr. Zibold to have the department review its finances and identify existing opportunities, including expiring leases, bed tax potential, and other revenue possibilities, that the Task Force could recommend to address the department's funding needs, encouraging the department to think creatively within the bounds of Article 7.

Hearing no further discussion on Article 7, the Task Force proceeded to the next agenda item.

V. Comments/Discussion by Task Force Members

A. Clerk's Meeting Minutes – None presented

B. Other Discussion Items

Ms. Galvez reminded the Task Force members of the Clerk's Office proposal regarding Section 6.05 of the Charter, which had been raised at the Task Force's first meeting. She explained that the proposal sought to modify the Clerk's role in the petition process, specifically by transferring

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to county administration certain functions currently assigned to the Clerk, including reviewing petition forms, verifying boundaries, and confirming their accuracy.

Chairman Kerbel acknowledged the reminder and inquired whether proposed language was readily available.

ACA Valdes advised that the matter had been tabled at the prior meeting because it involved policy considerations beyond a simple ministerial change, namely, whether the County wished to divest the Clerk of those responsibilities and, if so, which entity would assume them.

Chairman Kerbel indicated he was not seeking a motion on the matter that evening but wished to have proposed language available for the next meeting so the Task Force could review it in advance.

Ms. Galvez confirmed the Clerk's Office would prepare proposed language for the Task Force's consideration, and Chairman Kerbel requested that it be submitted to staff in advance of the next meeting so it could be circulated with the agenda.

Ms. Escarra suggested that the proposed language also be shared with the Mayor's Office for review and input.

Chairman Kerbel concurred, directing that the administration team review the language and provide its best recommendation.

Ms. Galvez clarified that the Clerk's proposal was intended to improve efficiency in the incorporation process, specifically in how information was reviewed, processed, and routed, and was not intended to create additional complexity.

Chairman Kerbel announced that the Task Force's next meeting would be held on March 24, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in the County Commission Chambers, 111 NW First Street, Second Floor, Miami, Florida.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Miami-Dade County Charter Review Task Force, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.