



## CITY OF COCONUT CREEK CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP MINUTES

Government Center  
4800 W. Copans Road  
Coconut Creek, Florida

Date: December 14, 2023  
Time: 6:00 p.m.  
Meeting No. 2023-1214WS

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### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Rydell called the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m.

### PRESENT UPON ROLL CALL:

Mayor Joshua Rydell  
Vice Mayor Sandra L. Welch  
Commissioner Jacqueline Railey  
Commissioner John A. Brodie  
Commissioner Jeffrey R. Wasserman  
City Manager Karen M. Brooks  
City Attorney Terrill C. Pyburn  
City Clerk Joseph J. Kavanagh

Mayor Rydell asked all to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Rydell noted that the meeting was being conducted live with a quorum physically present and that it was a continuation of a previous Workshop regarding Charter Amendments.

### DISCUSSION – CHARTER AMENDMENT UPDATE TO PROVIDE FOR ELECTED MAYOR

City Attorney Pyburn explained that in September, the Commission had discussed the question of a Charter Amendment to provide for an elected Mayor and asked staff to come back with additional options and discussion. She advised that she had distributed draft language options for a ballot question, along with a chart outlining a potential timeline for each option.

Assistant City Attorney Eve Lewis further explained the seven (7) options provided based on the direction of the Commission to explore a move to an elected Mayor. The options provided were as follows:

- Option A – Elected Mayor – 4 Year Term / 2027 Elections;
- Option A.1 – Elected Mayor – 2 Year Term / March Elections;
- Option A.1.1 – Elected Mayor – 4 Year Term / March 2029 Elections;
- Option A.1.2 – Elected Mayor – 4 Year Term / Redistricting Effective Upon March 2027 Elections;
- Option A.1.3 – Elected Mayor – 4 Year Term / Redistricting Effective Upon March 2029 Elections;
- Option A.2 – Vote Count Mayor – For 2 Years / March Elections; and
- Option A.3 – Vote Count Mayor – For 1 Year (Delayed) / March Elections.

Ms. Lewis explained that the options had come out of individual brainstorming sessions with each member of the Commission following the consensus reached on the dais. She stated staff had been asked to research how the question was addressed in other cities and explained that, of the 31 cities in Broward County, three (3) had a traditional appointed Mayor, including Coconut Creek, Hillsboro Beach, and Pembroke Park. She noted that, of those cities with elected Mayors, three (3) had a Strong Mayor form of government. She noted that the terms of office in those cities included eight (8) cities with two (2) year terms, 19 cities with four (4) year terms, and two (2) cities, Coconut Creek and Oakland Park, with one (1) year terms.

Mayor Rydell opened the floor for discussion from the Commission.

Commissioner Wasserman stated he did not believe Options A or A.1 were fair or equitable because there were candidates who had already filed for the March 2025 election. He asserted canceling an election with candidates would be bad for perception. He stated there should be more time in the process for public education and transparency. He noted Options A.2 and A.3 were difficult to get behind because there may be some races with more candidates than others.

Commissioner Brodie stated he did not like that the Charter Review Board could come in and undo the will of the people. Ms. Lewis explained the Charter Review Board could place an item back on the ballot, but the voters would ultimately need to make the change. Mayor Rydell provided a brief overview of the Charter Review Board process and noted the Board Members were educated voters making a review. He stated that the Commissioners and staff have an opportunity to participate in the Charter Review meetings and engage in the process. Commissioner Brodie asserted he did not want to take anything out of the hands of the voters of the City. He stated that process would have to be strongly understood if a change was made.

Commissioner Railey commented that the people make a choice when they vote for each Commissioner; and when the Commission appoints a Mayor from within, the residents already know that person. She stated that she was in favor of maintaining the status quo, noting that she would not want to get into a situation where the City had a Mayor for four (4) years and the residents did not know the person or their qualifications. Mayor Rydell asked whether, given her position overall, Commissioner Railey had any feedback on the seven (7) options provided by staff. Commissioner Railey stated if they went with any of the options, she would support a two (2) year Mayor.

Mayor Rydell asked whether anyone supported cancelling an election. Vice Mayor Welch stated she did not and had a problem with extending a term for anyone so that would remove options A, A.1, and A.1.1. Vice Mayor Welch reviewed the options. She stated A.1.2 could result in an elected official no longer living in the district for the position they held due to redistricting, which would not be equitable or fair. Ms. Lewis advised that a formal opinion from the Attorney General's office would be needed to clarify the redistricting question. Vice Mayor Welch commented that everyone had said the word transparency and felt the voters should decide. She suggested placing the item on a Regular Meeting agenda and opening it to public input.

Mayor Rydell asked for clarification on the process, and whether the option selected by the Commission would be heard on a Regular Meeting agenda before being transferred to the County Supervisor of Elections for the ballot. City Attorney Pyburn confirmed that this was correct. Mayor Rydell stated that process would allow for feedback and potential redirection by the public through two (2) readings of the ordinance. Vice Mayor Welch commented that the Commission was looking at seven (7) options; and if they only brought one (1) option to the meeting, the public would not have input on all seven (7) options. She stated it would only add one (1) meeting to the overall process. Discussion continued regarding the process and gathering public input.

Commissioner Wasserman stated they did not need to rush to get this issue on the November 2024 ballot, as there would be an election four (4) months later in March 2025. He commented on the confusion of having a currently-serving Mayor run for re-election as a Commissioner and noted this was part of the reason he leaned toward having an elected Mayor.

Vice Mayor Welch stated if it was the consensus of the Commission to move forward with one (1) option, she believed A.1.3 was most equitable.

Commissioner Brodie agreed that the Workshop provided an opportunity to discuss the options in a public forum. He stated his preference was for A.1.1.

Commissioner Wasserman stated A.1.2 and A.1.3 required ballot language that would not be clean. He compared the issue to changing calendars for the School District and stated there was always a sacrifice

to be made in the transition.

Commissioner Railey commented that the Commission had multiple meetings to understand and decipher the options and putting the seven (7) options on an agenda would be difficult for the public to understand. She reiterated that she was in support of maintaining status quo because there were certain districts that were stronger than others, and it would be possible for those districts to dominate the process.

Mayor Rydell noted the extensive effort that had gone into finding the best way to put this issue forward. He stated he was fine with A.1 or A.1.1, but the most important thing was getting the question to the ballot so the decision was left to the voters.

Ms. Lewis advised that she was hearing the extension of a term would not be palatable so the reverse could be considered, with terms being truncated by two (2) years to have the terms line up as they move from five (5) districts to four (4) districts. She noted this would look similar to A.1.2 or A.1.3 and reviewed the logistics briefly.

Commissioner Wasserman stated he believed they were rushing and should be looking at 2029 instead of 2027 for the change.

Vice Mayor Welch commented that the only option that pushed it further out and did not cancel any elections was A.1.3. Discussion continued regarding redistricting laws and staggering effective dates.

Commissioner Wasserman stated he was opposed to putting this on a November ballot. He asserted the residents who vote in March elections were really invested and committed to Coconut Creek.

Mayor Rydell sought a consensus on an option. Consensus was to move forward with an ordinance for A.1.1. Vice Mayor Welch was in favor of A.1.3 and Commissioner Railey supported maintaining status quo in place of any of the options presented.

Mayor Rydell thanked staff for the extensive work put into researching the issue and putting together the presentations.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.

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Joseph J. Kavanagh, MMC  
City Clerk

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Date