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NEWS



Critic Takes Shot at Coral Gables Commission as City Attorney



Transitions to Holland & Knight



"I've always wanted to explore the world of private practice," said Miriam Soler Ramos, the departing Coral Gables city attorney.



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Women in Law



Michael A. Mora



What You Need to Know

- The City Attorney for Coral Gables announced that she would resign from her role after over two decades of service.
- The attorney intends to join Holland & Knight at the end of January.
- A person who has been critical of the attorney questioned the manner in which the city commission announced her departure and replacement without meaningful public notice.

The city attorney for Coral Gables announced her resignation, effective late January, at a commission meeting Tuesday—which had at least one critic taking issue with whether some of the government officials she has represented for nearly a decade handled the process ethically.

Miriam Soler Ramos, the city attorney of Coral Gables and the most recent president of the Cuban American Bar Association, has served in the public sector for more than two decades in various capacities. In an interview after the meeting, she said that serving the city was the most significant honor of her professional career thus far.

“We’ve established an office of immense collaboration and teamwork,” Ramos said. “I hope that is something that will continue. The city is better for it. We are better for it. And that level of cooperation and collaboration helps our policymakers run a better city, helps our city manager and city clerk and ultimately the visitors of the city.”

However, Ariel Fernandez, who writes a local opinion newsletter, took issue with the announcement.

Fernandez has previously criticized Ramos for how she litigated matters, such as in a case involving the [rezoning of a convenience store](#) that led the [Miami-Dade Circuit Court to enter](#) a ruling, in part, over the waiving of a mandatory public notice.

But at this commission meeting, [Fernandez claimed](#) that “the item on her farewell and the appointment of her replacement was not on the printed copies of the agendas of those present at city hall for the meeting” until seven minutes before the meeting began. The delay kept the residents “in the dark,” as the commission immediately voted on Ramos’ replacement without public comment, he said.

“The question being asked by some is, if the commission is the one who as-a-whole appoints the city attorney, why would the mayor have the authority to negotiate a contract with an individual without a commission vote,” Fernandez said. He later added that since residents had “no opportunity for public comment or input,” many were unaware “this vote on the legal future of the city would even be taking place.”

Ramos, a University of Miami School of Law graduate, began her career as an [assistant state attorney](#) in Miami-Dade County in the career criminal and domestic violence units. She later pivoted to the job as a deputy advocate on the Miami-Dade Commission on Ethics & Public Trust before her current role as city attorney for Coral Gables.

The director of the ethics commission, Jose Arrojo, had described Ramos as the “[classic lawyer’s lawyer](#).” Within seven years, Ramos rose from the deputy city attorney to obtaining the top role in the office in which she has served for more than five years.

In her Jan. 5 [resignation letter](#), Ramos emphasized “the many legal victories for the city,” during her tenure as well as “financial settlements for the benefit of the city” and her office’s “essential legal support to city leaders to ensure the legal integrity of the city’s processes and policies.”

Ramos said in an interview that she would join Holland & Knight as a litigator, starting on Jan. 30, after she resigns from the city attorney’s office on Jan. 20.

At the commission meeting, the city promoted Deputy City Attorney Cristina M. Suarez to assume Ramos’ position upon resignation.

Ramos said Suarez is a “tried and trusted leader, an ethical public servant, and the ideal person to serve as my successor.” Ramos added that she had planned for her own transition to Big Law for “quite some time.”

“I’ve always wanted to explore the world of private practice,” Ramos explained. “As a government lawyer, it feels like the right time to do that. My kids are older, and I have finished my tenure as president of the Cuban American Bar Association, so it’s a good time to make a change.”

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