



**Charter Review Commission
Minutes
WebEx Board Meeting
February 16, 2021 7:00 PM**

Members Present: Chair Fred Evans, and members John Becker, David Gottesman, Harold Hodges, Jack Kelly, Robert Kurnick, Anita Powell, Judy Rudolph, Izola Shaw, Marissa Valeri and Robert Wright.

Staff Present: Acting City Attorney Cynthia Walters, City Clerk Sara Ferrell, and City Manager Management Assistant Melissa Wiak.

I. Welcome

City Clerk Sara Ferrell opened the meeting via WebEx at 7:08 p.m.

Chair Evans welcomed all those present.

II. Approval of Minutes

Motion: to approve the minutes from the February 2, 2021 Charter Review Commission meeting, as amended.

Moved by Commissioner Rudolph, seconded by Commissioner Kelly, and approved unanimously.

III. Report on Working Group Assignments

City Clerk Ferrell clarified that commissioners should e-mail Chair Evans if they have any corrections, deletions, or additions to the upcoming agenda. Chair Evans will then instruct the City Clerk to amend the agenda, as needed.

Mayor and Council Working Group:

- Subgroup A: Commissioner Powell is continuing to conduct research on expanding the size of the Council and term limits for the Mayor and Council. She suggested that the Mayor and Councilmembers should not serve more than two consecutive terms. She will report back to the Commission on whether the proposed term limits should go on future election ballots or if it should be a change to the City's charter.

- Subgroup B: Commissioner Valeri is continuing to conduct research on the subtopics of staggered terms of Councilmembers and representative districts and the boundaries for districts. She stated she is researching where all candidates and elected officials live to ensure all of Rockville is represented on the Council. City Clerk Ferrell stated that the City can provide election data if the Commission recommends consolidating certain districts or boundaries. Commissioner Valeri asked Acting City Attorney Walters if proportionally representative districts are also applicable to municipalities. Acting City Attorney Walters stated that she will research the inquiry and report back to the Commission.

Ex-officio Commission member Kurnick reported he is working on determine previous election costs, why a special election needs to occur between 105-150 days after a vacancy on the Council occurs, and to find out when elections in Rockville switched from the spring to November.

- Subgroup C: Commissioner Wright is continuing to research and report on the subtopics of the addition of a “resign to run” provision and the process for filling a vacancy in the Office of the Mayor and vacancy in the Office of a Councilmember. Commissioner Wright stated that the draft memorandum to the Mayor and Council asking them to write to the Attorney General regarding the “resign to run” provision will also include the suggestion that if a councilmember is certified as a winner for a State election, the councilmember’s seat should immediately become vacated.

Election Process/Franchise Expansion Working Group:

Commissioner Shaw reported that the group discussed how to increase and diversify voter turnout, particularly by race. City Clerk Ferrell stated that election data regarding a voter’s race is found through Census data.

The working group discussed barriers renters and English language learners face while voting. City Clerk Ferrell clarified that the State of Maryland only requires ballots to be printed in English and Spanish. Adding more languages to ballot might result in a lengthy ballot and discourage voters from participating in elections.

Board of Supervisors of Elections (BSE) Working Group:

Commissioner Kelly encouraged Commission members to review the 2002 Charter Commission Report. Commissioner Kelly reported that he is researching and analyzing how the BSE’s responsibilities have changed since the City’s code was created.

Commissioner Becker reported that jurisdictions in Maryland that, are similar in size to Rockville have as little as three, and as many as nine, BSE members; terms for BSE members range from one to four years; a city manager or mayor/council appoints BSE members; and there is no reporting requirement. Commissioner Becker stated he will continue to research these subtopics and provide an update to the Commission at its March 2, 2021 meeting.

Commissioner Rudolph reported she is cataloging past BSE videos and minutes to help the current BSE working group understand the background of recommended topics in the Commission's charge from the Mayor and Council. Additionally, Commissioner Rudolph summarized three proposed pieces of legislation at the State level:

1. Delegate Julie Palakovich-Carr introduced legislation that would require multi-unit dwellings to allow candidates to campaign on their premises.
2. Legislation regarding "rank-choice" voting has been introduced.
3. State Senator Cheryl Kagan introduced legislation requiring local BSE's to live stream their meetings. Acting City Attorney Walters clarified that under State law, a local Board of Elections is a *County* Board of Elections, so this proposed legislation does not apply to municipalities.

Commissioner Hodges asked Commissioner Kelly if previous City Charters requiring a certain number of councilmembers changed over time. Commissioner Kelly stated that the Charter has historically had four councilmembers and a mayor.

IV. Draft Outline – Work Topics

City Clerk Ferrell indicated she will share a prototype format for documenting recommendations for Commission review and discussion at the Commission's March 2, 2021 meeting.

V. Old/New Business

There was no old/new business.

VI. Next Steps

Chair Evans suggested that the Commission meet on March 2 and March 16, 2021. After the March 16, 2021 meeting, the Commission will revisit how often it should meet.

Commissioner Kelly suggested compiling an - "ad hoc"- group of one member from each task group to compile a template and outline for the Commission's final report to the Mayor and Council. City Clerk Ferrell indicated that the draft outline regarding work topics from the 2002 and 2012 Charter Review Commissions would assist the Commissioners in creating a template for compiling information and data.

VII. Future Meetings

Tuesday, March 2, 2021 – 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, March 16, 2021 –7:00 p.m.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Motion: to adjourn.

Moved by Commissioner Becker, seconded by Commissioner Wright and approved unanimously.