

City of Flint Charter Review Commission

Advisory Committee Meeting

Thursday, November 5, 2015

6:00 pm – 7:30 pm

Bethel United Methodist Church

1309 N Ballenger Hwy, Flint, MI

**Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)**

In Attendance: Nayyirah Shariff (Chair), Thomas Donnellan, William Hammond, Joe King, Steve Mintline, Chris Monk, Ben Pauli, Denise Yarbrough

Students present: Corey Ackerman, Univ. of Mich., Ashley Nickels, Rutgers Univ., Andrew Rising, Univ. Of Mich.

Commissioners Present: John Cherry, Cleora Magee, Charles Metcalfe, Victoria McKenzie, Heidi Phaneuf, Marsha Wesley, Barry Williams

**I. Call to Order – Introductions**

Nayyirah called the meeting to order at 6:06 pm. Introductions were made by all who were present.

**II. Charter Review Advisory Committee Roles and Responsibilities (attached)**

Heidi went over the roles and responsibilities of the Advisory Committee. Barry also invited everyone to the regular charter commission meeting.

**III. Structure of Advisory Committee Decision Making (discussion)**

Nayyirah presented the two models of the advisory committee meeting decision making structure. Cleo asked the Charter members from refraining on the decision making. A question was raised could they be combined? Steve likes Roberts Rules. Bill likes Consensus. It was mentioned that you have a stronger product with consensus building. Ben said to be aware of concerns regarding the potential of silencing voices. Nayyirah said that using a hybrid where you can use both works best, consensus can be more inclusive. Nayyirah asked the group if they want to make a decision today. Ben- no. Andrew – consensus. Bill- make a decision. Denise- undecided, wants to wait. Steve – wait for more participation. Chris – likes consensus. Joe – do it now, because the discussion will keep going. Nayyirah – wait until next meeting and then a decision will be made. The group agreed to wait until the next meeting and decide at the next meeting.

**IV. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (attached)**

Nayyirah presented the minutes. There was one change Denise Yarbrough's name was miss spelled, the change was made. If there are any other changes to the minutes, get with Heidi.

**V. Charter Review Survey Results (update)**

Heidi gave an update on the survey, the results are still being compiled. They will be emailed out.

**VI. Article 1 Discussion**

Nayyirah presented the discussion questions.

- 1. Commissioner Richardson has proposed a preamble that is based on the Model City Charter. It has been amended at the last Charter Commission meeting to include the original preamble components. What are your thoughts on this proposed preamble? (Proposal No. 18)*

Chris Monk asked about the crossed out words.

There was discussion on how the proposed preamble was developed. It was from the model city charter and incorporated the 1974 Charter Preamble components.

Chris M likes the new preamble. Ben asked if the form of government would be added into the preamble later. Yes, it will be looked at and may be amended.

The group decided to first talk about the preamble and then the declaration of rights.

Joe asked where these items came from “representative democracy, professional management, strong political leadership, citizen participation and regional cooperation”. It came from the model city charter.

Nayyirah is uncomfortable with the last part of this section. It feels more “laundry-listy”. She would like to see it worded well.

Ben thought it was okay to error on the side of inclusivity, if some are redundant, that is okay.

Nayyirah would like to take out citizen and put in resident instead. The group liked resident better than citizen.

Bill said it is not too exclusionary, the word citizen. Bill says we should reference PA 4, the Home Rule Act. In the declaration of rights we should address the home rule act.

Ben what about citizen and resident participation. Group said it sounds like a class structure.

Denise said that citizens sounds right to her in the preamble.

Steve thinks that citizen is an appropriate term.

Ben said popular participation? Others thought it was not quite the right word.

Victoria asked does the preamble have any legal aspects. She said that is something we need to look at.

Chris M. said the strong political leadership statement bothers her, it dominates the section.

Bill liked the Model City Charter Language, he sees representative democracy as a value.

Ben added the suggested statement "We propose to secure these values through:".

Nayyirah went through the changes that Jim made to the Declaration of Rights. Chris, Bill, Joe, and Denise like these changes.

Ben said the Declaration of Rights is more a list of duties for the city to its citizens, not a declaration of rights of its citizens. It matters to people if they have rights. Ben said he would be available to help with the rewording. The CRC will bring back an amended preamble to the next meeting.

Ashley noted the term declaration of rights is not in the title.

Ben suggested to cchange everything to rights language. "The citizens have the right to." Ben says it means something to people.

Victoria suggested, "The following declaration of rights of the citizens are as follows:"

It was suggested to have strong and clear language, because our government leaders are following this (or should be following this) document.

Denise suggested to use responsibility instead of duty.

Bill thinks that they may have left off some of the amendments in this Charter.

The Flint Public Library has a copy of all of the amendments. Bill says we should look this up.

2. Proposals No. 7 (1-501) Discusses Qualifications of Appointed Officers. How do we assure appointed officials are qualified?

John read the proposal.

Steve suggested to add a one year residency requirement to appointed officers.

This section refers to department heads who are appointed.

Mayor's only qualification inn the Charter is that they must be a voting resident. This section attempts to make residency requirement a requirement 90-days after appointment.

Steve suggested each appointed officer must have qualifications that are listed in the specific section that they are listed in further in the Charter.

Chris is concerned about appointed officials. We need checks and balances. Some people are appointed who are not qualified.

Cleo will get the job descriptions for these positions. Although sometimes these job description have been ignored.

Council has to confirm most of the appointments.

How do you prove that appointed officials are qualified?  
Department heads are subject to council approval.

Joe said that human resources has the info, mayor recommends someone, council votes. Where are we losing it?

Barry said it's about politics. Councilpersons will ask for benefits for their wards such as road and sidewalk improvements, for the approval of the appointees.

Ben said this decision, qualified appointees, is based on the form of government?  
We want to determine what is qualified?

Bill thinks as it stands this section is fine He asks there was a Board of Standards and conduct?

Cleo said yes there was a Standards of Conduct Board but it stopped meeting when Williamson was mayor, his city attorney ruled it was not necessary. Because they usurped his/her authority.

Tom said the standards of Conduct Board was advisory in nature.

Chris said there are too many back room deals to get things done, that's why we want checks and balances.

Heidi will get in contact with Ben to get the rights style language.

Victoria said look at page 21 and 22 for the discussion next time, these sections talk about appointed officials.

Bill next month we will be looking at the enforcement section.

**VII. Agenda items for next month's meeting (discussion)**

Nayyirah said at next month's meeting we will be looking at the rights based preamble and decide on governance structure for the group.

**VIII. Next Meeting- Charter Review Advisory Committee: Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 pm at Joy Tabernacle Church, 2505 N Chevrolet Avenue, Flint, MI**

Joe King has agreed to chair the December meeting. Thanks Joe. The January, 5, 2016 meeting will be in Ward 5. William Hammond has agreed to chair the meeting.

**IX. Public Comment:**

Cleo thanked everyone for coming. This is hard work, thanks for sharing your voice. Barry said to bring more people.

**X. Adjournment**

Joe made a motion, seconded by Steve to adjourn, motion carried. The meeting as adjourned at 7:40 pm.

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***Guiding Principles for the City of Flint Charter Review Commission***

*The City of Flint Charter Review process will be open to all Flint citizens. The Commission will ensure that public voices are recognized and that information is open and accessible to the public. The Commission will go to where the people are and will reach out to residents and businesses from all wards. The Commission will seek to engage and educate the community on the City of Flint Charter and will consider all ideas heard in the community. (Adopted June 18, 2015)*