

# Charter Review Commission Kick-off Meeting Group Discussion Results

September 26, 2015, University of Michigan – Flint

## What does good government look like?

Group 1:

- Transparent/ Honest
- Responsive and Responsible
- Effective and efficient services
- Listen to the people / accessibility
- Focused on citizens and their needs, work with them
- Professional / smart / qualified

Group 2:

- Demonstrably energetic, informed; ongoing public participation
- Committed to checks and balances
- Staying connected to constituents; following through with constituents concerns
- Public process for prioritizing services in all circumstances
- Administers fairly and equitably for all citizens
- Efficient monitoring and review process; process to implement the findings
- Mechanisms for accountability
- All elected and appointed positions occupied by people who are competent, caring, possess integrity, well trained and informed

Group 3:

- Government that has order. Focused on the needs of citizens and the city will follow that order.
- People that are elected/selected by the people of all the community leading them in sustaining and development of the people.
- Doing the right thing! All of the above.
- One that has leadership that believes in equality for all the people and is compassionate for the people it services.
- A government that abides by the charter of the city including all branches of government and its dept. working for the best interests of its people.

Group 4:

- Abiding by set rules
- Simple, efficient, and answerable to the people
- Representative and responsive to the people
- Transparent

- Good leadership skills
- Honesty and respect
- Listens to the people

Group 5:

- Working together for public good in Flint
- Transparency with government activity
- Guided by strong ethical standards
- Government easily accessible and responsive to citizens
- High level of communication in public outreach

Group 6:

- Financially responsible
- Efficient & flexible
- Clearly defined structure that remains adaptive as needs change
- Policy is guided by elected officials
- Direction is provided by people/voters execution by competent staff
- Constituted by and continuously informed by ongoing consent of citizens
- Serves the common good – all residents particularly the voiceless and vulnerable
- Avoids interfering in areas of social life adequately overseen by citizens – renders itself irrelevant by fostering strong civil society
- Willing and able to listen - using wise thoughts for good solutions

## What does bad government look like?

Group 1:

- Corrupt
- Overcomplicated
- Disorganized
- Under resourced / non-responsive
- Inefficient
- Incompetent / unprofessional
- Government won't listen

Group 2:

- Inefficient
- Unresponsive
- Ego driven; self-serving
- Lack of equity in how different parts of the city are served and heard
- Lack of collaboration among elected officials and city departments
- Poorly staffed and trained city departments

- Poor administrative practices
- Under resourced (staff and finances)
- Unnecessary bureaucratic

Group 3:

- Disorder – government not focused on people’s needs instead focused on special interests at the needs [expense] of people
- Bad government is government that is that we have now. That is not developing the community and that is critical. More people that work in the city don’t live in the city.
- Self-fulfilling – not working within the parameters of established city government rules. Argumentative – lacking respect for one another and the citizens.
- Doing nothing
- Bad leadership – leader with an ego

Group 4:

- Hidden agendas
- Consistent lies
- Using designated funds for other means
- Self-centered/selfish
- Constant squabbling/ irreconcilable differences
- Lack of concern for community

Group 5:

- Government that is divisive and argumentative
- Government that is not result oriented
- Full of road blocks to its citizens
  - Creates red tape
  - Incompetent
  - Having citizens left feeling powerless
- Lack of concern for the public / moral sense

Group 6:

- Difficult to navigate
- Lack of administrative skill and services
- Unresponsive / limited access
- Lacks transparency
- No sensible budgetary process
- Disruptive to everyday life
- Power holders serve self interest
- Doesn’t follow rules
- Few people / voices in control
- Lacking broad accountability

## What are some qualities that you want to see in your city government?

### Group 1:

- More responsible and accountable
- Elected officials are honest and professional, good listeners
- Appointed / career staff are competent
- Strategic, long-range thinking
- City council members work more closely with citizens
- A focus on attracting business
- Simpler government
- Faster and more responsive (career employees)
- Open to public input

### Group 2:

- Follow through
- Collaborative
- More facilitation of positive social change (ex: crime, violence, poverty)
- Transparency
- Complete honesty in fiscal practices
- Consistency; equitable treatment for all people and areas

### Group 3:

- Leaders who know the needs of residents. Working on the greatest need first- finishing that and moving to need #2 and so forth in process. Making sure the process is complete.
- Honesty, intelligence, progressive
- Transparency, honesty, integrity, commitment

### Group 4:

- Government for the people and by the people
- Reduction of costs where possible
- Honesty and truth about leaders goals
- Cooperation and respect among elected officials
- Open to comments
- Teamwork

### Group 5:

- Showing more integrity
  - Having better understanding from different groups of residents
- Government having better understanding in their roles
- Flint being turned to positive efforts – throughout the city
- Building stronger foundation with youth

Group 6: [Combined with the next question]

## **What are some things that you would like to see in the Charter?**

Group 1:

- Avoid being too complicated
- Vetted appointment process; qualified staff
- Explicit authority related to economy/ economic development
- Reinstate ombudsman
- Consider Civil Service Commission
- Guarantees representation for all of Flint – at least some ward – based council positions
- Unsure about strong mayor or council / manager

Group 2: (stated there was not consensus on these items while presenting)

- Fewer council persons
- Redistricting of wards based on a smaller number
- Term limits for council
- Two at large council members
- Council member just for downtown Flint
- Go to weak mayor form of government; professional city manager hired by city council
- Keep Master Plan current and continually executed
- Mechanisms built in to ensure accountable and effective planning and processes in all areas of city government including crisis planning

Group 3:

- Ombudsman Office functional
- Civil Service & Human Relations Commission functional
- Reverse residency requirements for working in the City of Flint (Police Department, Fire Department, all City Departments)

Group 4:

- Not sure yet
- Continue to review and learn before making amendments
- Professional City Manager/ Administrator
- A workable plan for the community
- Accountability
- Restore Ombudsman / independent process for complaints and resolution
- Ability to change to meet current times
- Eliminate primary elections

Group 5:

- Different methods of giving outreach to communities
- Show more involvement within answers given

- Better implementation of the charter

Group 6:

- Process that is inclusive and informative
- Forward looking and growth minded while mindful of current conditions
- Simple vs prescriptive
- Multi-year budgeting
- Elected officials supported with competent staff
- Structure that allows for healthy governance
- Up to date anti-discriminatory provisions
- Include Chief Planner, Ombudsman, and Civil Service
- Defined appointed positions need to be responsive to what is necessary