



CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

February 7, 2018

The Charter Review Commission meeting of February 7, 2018 was called to order by Chairman Ivancic at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers.

Roll Call

The following were present at roll call:

Daniel Ivancic; Mark Ozanick; Thomas Thielman; Joseph Turi; Joseph Yesilosky; Donald Zimmerman.
Member excused: Linda Lipovec

Secretary Iafelice reported that Mayor Barbish will be appointing two residents to fill the vacancies that remain on this commission.

Reading and Approval of Minutes

After reading the minutes and there being no objections, the minutes of the Organizational Meeting of the Charter Review Commission meeting of January 31, 2018 were approved as presented.

Communications

There were no communications.

Old Business

There was no old business.

New Business

Mr. Ivancic noted that after reviewing sections of the Charter, questions that arise will be submitted as a group to the Law Director for clarification. The commission will identify where changes may be suggested but will discuss in more detail at a future meeting. There are 28 sections in the Charter that have been amended in the past and 40 sections have not. Some items will be moved through more quickly than others. At any given meeting, the group may not finish discussion on the subject at hand, but Mr. Ivancic will have a 'hard stop' ten minutes before the hour is up to allow for Public Comment, then continue to 'Other', time permitting.

DISCUSSION:

Preamble –

There were no comments on the Preamble.

Article I Name and Boundaries –

Mr. Turi began the discussion concerning this section. The commission will ask for clarification from the Law Director concerning voting on the city annexing or merging with another body politic. Is this accomplished through public vote or vote of Council?

Mr. Ivancic commented that as the commission continues this project, some sections that seem questionable may become clearer after reading/reviewing additional sections.

Article II Powers –

Mr. Zimmerman made reference to the City of Norwalk's language concerning 'Powers'. He feels that it may be better written than the City of Wickliffe's language on the subject.

**Article III The Council –
Section III-1. Composition, Term and Qualifications.**

Mr. Yesilosky does not feel two at-large council positions are needed.

Mr. Ozanick is an advocate of staggered terms, as are other commission members.

Mr. Turi added that the position of Council President is actually an at-large position and that council should elect its own president.

Mr. Zimmerman is uncomfortable with three at-large council positions and four ward positions. The payroll cost of council positions should be taken into consideration. He further commented that there is a certain amount of merit in not trying to fix what is not broken and noted that this topic was discussed at great length during the previous two reviews of the charter and ultimately nothing was presented to the voters.

Mr. Thielman is a proponent of staggered terms and would entertain going to five council members. However, more power would then be concentrated in each person. He agrees with seven members and has no problem with the at-large positions, unless more wards would be created. He feels that the Council President should be elected by the body, not by the electorate.

Mr. Zimmerman stated that discussions of the prior two Charter Review Commissions included the idea that staggered terms would create increased voter interest and participation. After hearing from former and then-current elected officials members, the previous commissions had serious concerns with staggered terms, which would have involved ‘running with cover’.

Mr. Turi would like to weigh the pros and cons of changing the number of council seats to evaluate what would be best for the City.

Mr. Zimmerman would like to invite current and recent former elected officials to hear their viewpoints.

Mr. Ivancic agrees with having an odd number of council seats; most votes require a simple majority vote. He would like to see staggered elections from the standpoint of not having the potential of a knowledge vacuum. He supports ‘running with cover’, but would like to see that in running for mayor, a current council person would need to resign his/her council seat.

Mr. Turi commented that with the advent of social media, staggered terms give the electorate the opportunity to stay involved more often.

After hearing various opinions concerning eligibility to be a member of Council, Mr. Ivancic noted that this topic will possibly be reviewed at a later date.

Section III-2. Wards.

This section would need to be reviewed if changes to Section III-1 were proposed since there is definitely a relationship between the two.

Section III-3. Removal.

The question arose whether or not a provision for ‘recall’ needs to be addressed. This will be marked for future discussion.

Section III-4. Vacancies.

The question to be addressed at a future meeting: Should vacancies be filled by vote of council (or appointment of mayor), rather than by special election?

Public Comment –

Being at the one-hour mark of the meeting, Mr. Ivancic called for Public Comment. There being no one in the audience, Public Comment was closed.

Other –

The commission will continue to accumulate questions and topics, then request the appropriate person(s) to attend a meeting for discussion/clarification.

Mr. Thielman suggested the meetings be 1.5 hours in length, although at this time, Mr. Ivancic prefers a one-hour time limit.

Mr. Ivancic asked that all come to the next meeting prepared with drafts of ideas to be further discussed. The balance of Article III will be discussed and then discussion of Article IV will begin.

Mr. Zimmerman requested that the documents pertaining to the Charter Review Commission of 1998 and 2008 be emailed to commission members for their review. Secretary Iafelice will be sure this is accomplished.

Adjournment –

Motion was made to adjourn the meeting. By show of hands, all were in favor and none were opposed. Motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 7:09 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 28, 2018 at 6:00 pm in Council Chambers.

Respectfully submitted:



Susan M. Iafelice, Secretary

Approved:



Daniel Ivancic, Chairperson