# **Minneapolis Charter Commission Minutes**

Rescheduled Meeting Monday, July 9, 2012 - 4:30 p.m.

Room 317 City Hall, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Commissioners Present: Clegg (Chair), Dolan, Ferrara, Gerdes, Kozak, Lickness, Peltola, Rubenstein,

Sandberg, Schwarzkopf (quorum 8)

Commissioners Excused: Cohen, Connell, Johnson, Lazarus, Metge

Also Present: Burt Osborne, Assistant City Attorney

#### 1. Roll Call

Chair Clegg called the meeting to order at 4:01 p.m. Roll call was taken.

## 2. Adopt Agenda

Sandberg moved adoption of the agenda. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Cohen, Connell, Johnson, Kozak, Lazarus, Metge.

## 3. Approve Minutes of June 13, 2012

Peltola moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of June 13, 2012. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Cohen, Connell, Johnson, Kozak, Lazarus, Metge.

### 4. Chair's Report

Included in No. 5 below.

#### **Discussion**

#### 5. **Plain Language Charter Revision:**

- a) Discussion of most recent version of the Plain Language Charter Revision; and
- b) Consideration of placing the Plain Language Charter Revision on the 2012 ballot.

Clegg recommended that the Commission defer placing the Plain Language Charter Revision (PLCR) on the ballot until 2013 for the following reasons:

- Confusion regarding the limits on taxing authority.
- A "Vote No" campaign underway regarding two state constitutional amendments on the ballot this
- The request of the Minneapolis DFL Party that the PLCR not be placed on the ballot in 2012 because of possible confusion with the constitutional amendments.
- The City Attorney had issued a memorandum in opposition to the PLCR.
- A municipal election year in 2013 would be a more appropriate context to have a discussion about the PLCR.

Ferrara moved to defer consideration of placing the Plain Language Charter Revision on the ballot until 2013. Seconded.

Ferrara suggested that deferring the ballot question until 2013 would allow the city time to budget the cost of drafting the new ordinances required by the PLCR. Although the Commission had agreed in the past not to make any substantive amendments to the Charter until the PLCR passed, he recommended that if members of the Commission wished to bring forward more changes to the charter during the coming year that those changes also be considered, either as a separate ballot question or incorporated into the PLCR.

Rubenstein agreed with the Chair's recommendations but noted that the City Council would not unanimously approve the PLCR, and she was not convinced that taking it to the voters was the best way to deal with it. She suggested beginning discussions at the next meeting about how to get the PLCR approved by the City Council or, if necessary, make changes to the charter in increments rather than revising the entire charter at once.

Lickness supported the motion and inquired why the City Attorney's Office hadn't raised their issues earlier.

Dolan disagreed with the idea of adding new issues to the PLCR because it would muddy the waters and possibly create opposition to the project. The PLCR should be passed first, and then the Commission could work on other issues.

Ferrara stated that he felt that the Commission had, for the most part, completed their work on the PLCR and now it was in the hands of the voters or the City Council. Perhaps a study group could be formed with the City Council to work together to revise the charter. Issues that have been deferred for years until the PLCR project was complete should now be considered.

Clegg suggested that at the August meeting Commissioners discuss their continuing strategy with respect to the Plain Language Charter Revision and also what projects to place on the agenda for the coming year, particularly looking at amendments to the charter that could obtain a 13-0 Council vote.

Schwarzkopf spoke in favor of the motion and described the way the St. Paul Charter Commission rewrote their charter in the 1960's and changed their form of government. He suggested using sample charters from other U.S. cities compiled by the Civic League, which would have gone through a thorough vetting process alleviating many of the concerns that were raised regarding the PLCR. He stated that he would contact the Civic League and obtain a copy of a charter to bring to the August meeting.

Kozak stated that he was in favor of the motion because of opposition to the state initiatives. In the next few months, the Commission should determine whether the opposition of the City Attorney's Office could be resolved and see if any changes or modifications could be made to win the support of the opposition.

Peltola supported the motion but inferred from the memo that the City Attorney's Office would never reach a level of comfort with the PLCR. Deferring the PLCR ballot question until 2013 would allow time to allocate funds to draft the required ordinances. Perhaps the Commission could participate in the drafting process during the coming year so the public could see what the ordinance changes would look like after the revision is approved.

The Ferrara motion to defer consideration of placing the Plain Language Charter Revision on the ballot until 2013 was adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Cohen, Connell, Johnson, Lazarus, Metge.

# **Public Commentary**

There was no one from the public wishing to address the Charter Commission.

Sandberg moved to adjourn. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Cohen, Connell, Johnson, Lazarus, Metge.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m.

Submitted by: Peggy Menshek, Charter Commissioner Coordinator