

# Minneapolis Charter Commission Minutes

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, June 1, 2005 - 4:00 p.m.

Council Chamber, Room 317 City Hall, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Present: Commissioners Bernstein, Thaden, Lazarus, Bujold, Collier, Dolan, Ferrara, Lichty, Melendez, Metge, Ponsford, Theurer

Absent: Commissioners Clegg, Dziedzic, Klassen (all excused)

City Attorney Staff: Burt Osborne

1. Roll Call
2. Adopt Agenda

THADEN MOVED TO ADOPT THE AGENDA. Seconded.

The motion was adopted upon a voice vote.

3. Accept Minutes of May 4, 2005

THADEN MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES. Seconded.

The motion was adopted upon a voice vote.

## Unfinished Business

4. Minneapolis City Charter (re Reform):
  - a) Request from City Council Intergovernmental Relations Committee (IGR) to the Minneapolis Charter Commission to conduct public hearings to collect ideas for Minneapolis Charter reform, beyond the scope of current "non-substantive" revisions.
  - b) Summary of comments received at May 18 and May 25 public hearings.

Chair Bernstein noted the summary of comments that was attached to the electronic agenda. He recalled some of the issues brought forward including, but not limited to, instant runoff voting, size of City Council, and independent boards.

Ferrara said he thought the meetings went well and the issues that were brought forward were well thought out. Next time around, however, he recommends a more narrow scope and, perhaps, to bring forward the subject of the revisions. One valid point brought forward was that there is a lack of accountability in the government structure.

Chair Bernstein noted that the hearings were requested by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee (IGR) on the broader subject of the Charter; discussion of the revisions was intentionally not included.

Thaden recalled that many comments were from elected or want-to-be-elected persons. The redistricting question didn't come up. With the Minneapolis League of Women Voters (MLWV) report coming out soon and more public hearings planned, he wondered if the Commission should send the report forward to IGR now or wait.

Chair Bernstein added that he told the Council that a report would be forwarded in June.

Thaden noted that the Commission was not consulted on that schedule; there could be more information included or the form modified.

Collier remarked that the MLWV report isn't anticipated until August. It is foremost that the Commission gets information out; the revision process needs to be dealt with also.

Chair Bernstein noted that all he is suggesting be forwarded are the preliminary comments.

BUJOLD MOVED TO ADOPT THE NOTES AS THE RECORD (WRITTEN COMMENTS TO BE INCLUDED). Seconded.

The motion was adopted upon a voice vote.

c) Minneapolis City Charter (re Redistricting):

*Subject matter* of ordinances amending the Minneapolis City Charter relating to redistricting, amending: a) Chapter 1, Section 3 relating to City and Ward Boundaries: Thirteen Wards; b) Chapter 2, Section 4 relating to Officers--Elections: Election (By Ostrow - Referred to IGR from the City Council 11/21/03)

*Intergovernmental Relations Committee Action of 1/11/05: Refer back to Minneapolis Charter Commission for further discussion in the broader scope of City Charter reform.*

*Action Taken on February 2, 2005: Matter to be included in consideration of Charter Reform issue; Action Taken 4/6/05: Tabled*

#### 5. 6th Draft to City Charter Revisions:

*Staff report: [Charter Revision 6th draft](#); [Charter Revision 6th draft-relined](#); [Moir letter](#) [Library Board of Trustees](#) [Letter](#); [Park Board comments](#); [City Attorneys comments](#); [Summary of Charter Changes](#); [Charter revision timelines](#)*

*Action Taken by the Commission on 1/5/05: The reporter will report back to the Charter Commission by June 30, 2005 with the best and final draft; Public hearings postponed until after the final draft is presented*

Thaden noted that there is a July deadline on submitting items to the IGR Committee for any Charter amendment process; there isn't enough time if it comes to the July 6 Charter Commission meeting

Collier explained that the Charter Commission has the option of sending a revision forward for public referendum without the Council's approval. That's an August deadline.

COLLIER MOVED THAT THE CHARTER COMMISSION SUBMIT THE CHARTER CHANGES (THE FINAL DRAFT OF THE REVISIONS) TO THE CITY COUNCIL FOR THEIR VOTE TO BE PART OF THE BALLOT IN NOVEMBER 2005. Seconded.

Thaden said he would want ample time to review the information when a final draft is received. Also, a campaign would have to be put together to get it passed; is there someone who will step forward on that? With those considerations, he believes it's too late.

Melendez stated that the amendments could go forward to the ballot but they wouldn't pass. He thought the decision had been made to wait until 2006. The effort would take more than a couple months.

Lazarus suggested that the Commission can't assume that the last draft will be acceptable.

LAZARUS MOVED THAT ANY CHARTER AMENDMENT WOULD ONLY BE PRESENTED AFTER APPROVAL BY THE CHARTER COMMISSION.

Ferrara said he'd prefer to see it on the ballot when there is a City election; however, it is more important to have it in its best form.

Theurer agreed that the November ballot would be good but the undertaking shouldn't be underestimated. Through experience, he knows how much work it takes to create the necessary awareness. The City Council would have to approve this and then really put heart into sending it forward.

Melendez said there isn't much work left to be done. His concern is sending it to a ballot without preparation. There will be opposition to changes no matter what they are.

Dolan noted that sending it to the ballot would generate lots of interest. If it were to go down in 2005, could it be sent again in 2006?

Chair Bernstein said it can be done but that's not advisable.

Burt Osborne, Assistant City Attorney, clarified that amendments to the Charter are guided by State law. Any change must be introduced by ordinance by the City Council or must be presented by citizen petition.

THADEN MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO CHANGE 2005 TO 2006.

Lichty remarked that the discussion is about getting the job done but he isn't certain all Commissioners agree on what that job is. The revisions were intended to "clean up" the Charter but, as noted previously, there have been several drafts and certain accommodations and that may have changed the substance of the revisions.

Collier suggested that the best way to get the word out is to have public meetings and get media (newspaper) coverage. That could be now or later (2006).

Thaden's motion was accepted as a friendly amendment.

The motion lost by the following roll call vote:

Yeas - Collier, Dolan, Ferrara;

Nays - Bujold, Lazarus, Lichty, Melendez, Metge, Ponsford, Thaden, Theurer, Bernstein.

Absent - Clegg, Dziedzic, Klassen

Melendez, before departing the meeting, requested additional time on the June 30 deadline for the final draft.

THADEN MOVED TO DELAY THE FINAL REPORT FROM JUNE 30 TO JULY 30.  
Seconded.

Lazarus suggested that the end of August may be more appropriate; there is no need to increase the pressure needlessly.

LAZARUS MOVED TO AMEND THE MOTION TO CHANGE THE DEADLINE TO AUGUST 31. Seconded.

Collier suggested that a committee should be set up to work on a hearing process for next year.

The motion to change the date for a report back was adopted upon a voice vote.

COLLIER MOVED THAT, BY THE SEPTEMBER MEETING (SEPTEMBER 7), THE CHARTER COMMISSION WILL HAVE A SCHEDULE ESTABLISHED TO HOLD HEARINGS ON THE FINAL CHANGES (REVISIONS) SO THAT THEY CAN BE READY FOR THE 2006 BALLOT. Seconded.

The motion was adopted upon a voice vote.

Lazarus noted that there will be funding needed to promote the process and that should be under consideration by the members.

Bujold wondered if it is legal for the Charter Commission to advocate for changes.

Burt Osborne said he hasn't heard of a prohibition, however, he will report at the next meeting.

The following members volunteered to serve – Collier, Dolan, Bujold (with insight from Melendez).

## **New Business**

Lichty offered congratulations to Brian Melendez for achieving the position of State Chair of the DFL.

Letter from Bridge Faricy, Chair of the St. Paul Charter Commission requesting a meeting to discuss interest in hiring a lobbyist on behalf of home rule cities for the 2006 legislative session

Chair Bernstein said he'd be glad to meet with her and would request the Commission's permission to do so; he'd like someone to join him.

Collier noted that cities of the first class have a lobby already in place; she would question the need for additional services.

Metge volunteered to join Chair Bernstein.

Lazarus moved to adjourn. Seconded.

Julie Bartell

`Clerk of the Charter Commission