

# Minneapolis Charter Commission Minutes

*Regular Meeting*

**Wednesday, August 6, 2008 - 4:00 p.m.**  
**Room 317 City Hall, Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Commissioners Present: Clegg, Connell, Ferrara, Jancik, Klassen, Lazarus, Lichty, Rubenstein, Stade

Commissioners Excused: Bujold, Metge, Remme, Street

Commissioners Absent: Bernstein, Dolan

Also Present: Lisa Needham, Assistant City Attorney

## 1. Roll Call

In the absence of Chair Bernstein, Vice Chair Lazarus called the meeting to order at 4:15 p.m. Roll call was taken.

## 2. Adopt Agenda

*Commissioner Klassen moved adoption of the agenda. Seconded.*  
Adopted by unanimous vote.

## 3. Approve Minutes of July 9, 2008

*Commissioner Lichty moved approval of the minutes of July 9, 2008. Seconded.*  
Adopted by unanimous vote.

## New Business

### 4. Charter Revision:

#### **Timing and Process for Presentation of Final Draft of Revised Charter.**

Commissioner Lazarus asked for suggestions on presenting the final draft of the Revised Charter to the City Council.

Former Commissioner Brian Melendez was present and volunteered to compile side-by-side comparisons of the current and revised Charter, a table of provisions being deleted from the current Charter, and a table of provisions being moved to ordinance. He suggested that each Council Member receive a personal visit from two to three Commissioners to familiarize them with the Plain Language Charter Revision Project and compile questions to be answered at a future Study Session. The Commission may also want to solicit letters of support from the Park Board and the Board of Business Agents which would state, on the record, that they have no objections to the Revised Charter.

Commissioner Ferrara suggested holding a public hearing at some point to invite comment and an exchange of ideas.

Commissioner Clegg recommended that the Commission complete the package and put it on the website as soon as possible.

A discussion ensued regarding which Council Members each Commissioner would meet with. Commissioner Clegg agreed to poll all Charter Commissioners by e-mail, and then suggest assignments for groups of two to three Commissioners to meet with individual Council Members and the Mayor.

Commissioner Lazarus asked the Assistant City Attorney if a formal motion was required on the issue. He did not feel that matters of process needed to be formalized with a motion.

Lisa Needham, Assistant City Attorney, stated that a formal motion would only be needed if not everyone had weighed in on the discussion, and since everyone had, she was not concerned about formalizing the process decision.

Commissioner Ferrara suggested continued lobbying of Council Members following the Study Session in an effort to gain support. Also, some Commissioners should attempt to be present at the Council Committee meetings and hearings regarding the revised Charter.

Commissioner Connell inquired if anyone was aware of a citizen organization to which the Charter Commission could appeal to get behind this effort.

Mr. Melendez stated that the League of Women Voters had done a fairly in depth analysis of Minneapolis government, although he was not sure where they would stand on the Charter revision since that is more of a process issue. He also noted that when the revision process first began, a group of outside readers selected from the major political parties were utilized to review the process.

Cheryl Luger, Ward 12, was present and noted that the Minneapolis Institute of Arts was not mentioned in the credits as having had input into the Charter revision. She also inquired if there was a document available listing the items that will be moved to ordinance.

Mr. Melendez stated that he had listed specifically Jack Qvale, Brian Rice, and Jim Michels in the credits because they had been engaged for many months in the revision process. Regarding which items are being moved to ordinance, the last side-by-side comparison contained a key showing every provision to be moved to ordinance. That document will be included in the final compendium, as well.

Michael Katch, Ward 7, 111 Marquette Avenue South, was present and inquired regarding the Water Works provision, and also as to the proper time to begin a process to modernize the Charter so that independent boards could be given power over the various City Departments.

Commissioner Lazarus stated that Mr. Katch's inquiry regarding the independent boards would involve a substantive change which is not in the scope of the revision project. Mr. Katch would need to follow the Charter amendment procedure separately from the revision process if he wished to pursue that change.

Mr. Melendez responded to Mr. Katch's question regarding Water Works. The City is already operating a Water Works division which operates in the black. It was his opinion the provision would prohibit the City from going into debt to purchase a public utility.

*Commissioner Clegg moved to adjourn. Seconded.*  
Adopted upon a voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:58 p.m.

Peggy Menshek  
Charter Commission Coordinator