

# Minneapolis Charter Commission Minutes

*Regular Meeting*

**Wednesday, March 3, 2010 - 4:00 p.m.**

**Room 319 City Hall, Minneapolis, Minnesota**

Commissioners Present: Bernstein (Chair), Bujold, Clegg, Connell, Dolan, Ferrara, Jancik, Kadwell, Lazarus, Lichty, Metge, Remme, Rubenstein

Commissioners Excused: Stade, Street

Also Present: Dana Banwer, Assistant City Attorney

## 1. Roll Call

Chair Bernstein called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. Roll call was taken.

## 2. Adopt Agenda

*Lichty moved adoption of the agenda. Seconded.*

Adopted upon a voice vote.

## 3. Approve Minutes of February 3, 2010

*Rubenstein moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of February 3, 2010. Seconded.*

Adopted upon a voice vote.

## Old Business

### 4. Charter Commission Redistricting Task Force: Update.

Rubenstein summarized what took place at the last Redistricting Task Force meeting. Meetings have been scheduled for March 25 and March 31 and are intended as open meetings which will be noticed on the city's website because of a possible quorum of Charter Commissioners attending. The Task Force is waiting to get the requested assistance with research in order to make some recommendations.

Ferrara clarified that the March 25 meeting would be a Task Force meeting, not a Charter Commission meeting. The intent of the March 25 meeting was to have a discussion about improving the redistricting process and ask for suggestions from interested parties.

Clegg stated that the March 25 meeting will be a preliminary meeting to discuss desirable and/or undesirable outcomes and what steps might be necessary to achieve those outcomes.

Tina Sanz, Ginny Gelms, and Dani Connors-Smith were present from the City Clerk's Office. Sanz stated that the Clerk's Office would provide staff assistance to the Redistricting Task Force and asked for clarification on the scope of the research the Commission was requesting, particularly relating to best practices.

Bernstein stated that best practices related to finding out what processes other cities use for redistricting, rather than trying to make a determination of what is a best practice by one municipality as opposed to another.

Dolan suggested that it would be helpful to know what particular things had been problems in the past so the Commission could try to avoid those issues.

Rubenstein noted that a 100-page history of redistricting in Minneapolis was not needed. Information as to how the Redistricting Commission was formed and how it has changed would be useful.

Clegg thought it would be more productive if available members of the Task Force were able to sit down with the staff of the Clerk's Office to provide direction as to what was needed.

Bernstein suggested Task Force members email the Clerk available dates and times, and she could coordinate with city staff.

Council Member Gordon was present and stated that at the first meeting of the Task Force, it was decided to have one meeting for gathering input focused on the question "What should be the guiding principles and values underlying the redistricting process?" It will basically be a listening session for the Task Force, but all Charter Commissioners would be welcome. It was thought that an invitation from the Commission might get people to attend. Political parties, academics, the League of Women Voters, and groups such as the NAACP should be included. At the meeting on March 31st, the Task Force will consider the discussion that took place on the 25th and discuss their next steps.

Connell requested that the meeting on March 25th be recorded.

Discussion ensued as to who the invitation would be from and how to get the invitation out to interested parties.

Ferrara noted that he had emailed Task Force members guidelines drafted by the City Attorney's Office for the 2002 Redistricting Commission along with other documentation from 2002.

Rubenstein didn't realize that the March 25th meeting was going to be in the nature of a public hearing. She thought the Task Force was going to first focus on what issues they might want to hear about.

Gordon stated that it was his impression that the meeting on March 25 was being held to ask the question: "What should be the guiding principles and values underlying the redistricting process?" The meeting would be more of a focus group than a public hearing, and a smaller group of select people would be invited.

Clegg thought it would be helpful to have a handout available at the meeting explaining how the redistricting system currently works and offered to put something together. It would also be helpful to have a list of the redistricting processes used by similar-sized municipalities.

Metge suggested requesting contact information from the NRP neighborhoods and the new Neighborhood Community Relations Department, which probably had massive lists of the different cultural communities. She also suggested sending out the invitation on the city's gov-doc delivery system.

Gordon stated that he would forward to the Clerk a one-sentence description of the meeting to post on the city's web calendar.

Sanz asked for clarification as to when the Commissioners would need the information from the Clerk's Office. Clegg stated that they did not expect the research to be completed by the March 25th meeting.

Bernstein suggested that staff collect whatever they could find about redistricting and the redistricting process, and the Task Force could sift through it and see what might be relevant.

Clegg suggested other Commissioners forward him names of people to invite to the March 25 meeting, and he would compile a list and send a notice.

Bernstein stated that he had an issue with the selectivity of the invitations and the reaction if someone or an organization felt slighted.

Metge agreed stating that she thought redistricting was a hot button issue and that the Commissioners shouldn't officially be inviting individuals without having a public process. It felt awkward to her. If, as individuals, the Commissioners want to let people know, that's a different story.

Connell wanted to be on the record as stating that if this body, or if the select body that this body has appointed as a special commission for this purpose, is selective and officially invites groups and doesn't invite other groups, there will be many irritated people and there will be fallout. He was in favor of individuals inviting whomever they chose, but did not want to be in any way on the record as supporting a selective invitation list to any of the meetings.

Metge requested that the record indicate that she strongly agreed with Commissioner Connell's statement.

In response to whether the meeting on March 25th would be considered a public hearing, Banwer stated that the meeting seemed to be more of a focus group discussion, and perhaps that is how the Commission should characterize it. The Task Force was seeking input into the redistricting process and would report back to the Charter Commission. The Commission intends to hold public hearings in the future.

Kadwell stated that it appeared that the people who will be invited to the March 25th meeting were those who may have some area of expertise and experience with the issue and can contribute to the conversation, which is very different from a public hearing.

Bernstein summarized that within the next week, the Task Force will email available dates and times to the Clerk to coordinate a meeting with city staff. There will be a meeting on March 25th, which will be noticed on the city's web calendar, to obtain input from interested parties on the redistricting process. There will be a recording of the meeting. There will be a follow-up Task Force meeting on March 31st to discuss what was said on the 25th. Bernstein added that he wanted to make sure that the DFL, Republican, Green, and Independence parties all received notice of the March 25th meeting.

## New Business

**5. City Council Briefing:**

**Consider request from the Elections Committee that the Charter Commission, along with Election staff, brief the Elections Committee of the City Council on the current redistricting process and the history leading up to it.**

Gordon stated that the Elections Committee only meets as needed, and the Commission can report when they are ready.

By unanimous consent, Item 5 was postponed to the April meeting.

*Lichty moved to adjourn. Seconded.*

Adopted upon a voice vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

Peggy Menshek  
Charter Commissioner Coordinator