

Minneapolis Charter Commission Minutes

February 2, 2011 - 4:00 p.m.

Room 319 City Hall, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Commissioners Present: Clegg (Chair), Connell, Dolan, Ferrara, Gerdes, Kozak, Lazarus, Lickness, Metge, Peltola, Rubenstein, Sandberg, Schwarzkopf

Commissioners Excused: Jancik, Stade

Also Present: Susan Segal, City Attorney; Peter Ginder, Deputy City Attorney; Burt Osborne, Assistant City Attorney

1. Roll Call

Chair Clegg called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Roll call was taken.

2. Adopt Agenda

Lickness moved adoption of the agenda. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Jancik, Stade.

3. Approve minutes of regular meeting of January 5, 2011

Dolan moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of January 5, 2011. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Jancik, Stade.

4. Chair's Report

Clegg stated that this would have been Commissioner Jancik's last meeting; however, he was unable to attend. The application period for the Charter Commissioner vacancy remains open until February 18. There are currently four applications on file.

Susan Segal, City Attorney, was present and introduced Burt Osborne, Assistant City Attorney, as the legal counsel to the Charter Commission, replacing Dana Banwer.

Osborne stated that he was excited to be advising the Charter Commission again.

Old Business

8. Plain Language Charter Revision: Update on status of the Plain Language Charter Revision by City Attorney.

Susan Segal stated that the Plain Language Charter Revision had undergone an extensive review. It was felt that some things in the draft did rise to the policy level. Meetings had been held with Council President Barbara Johnson, Council Vice President Robert Lilligren, Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Committee Chair Elizabeth Glidden, and former IGR Committee Chair Betsy Hodges. Council Members are in the process of providing feedback. Within the next month, the City Attorney's Office will present a report back to the IGR Committee and then to the Charter Commission. She thought the Charter Commission would accept the City Attorney's changes and tweaks as friendly amendments. She thanked the Charter Commission, and former Commissioner Brian Melendez, for their work on the revised Charter.

Lickness inquired as to the timeline if the Charter Commission accepted the changes and returned the document to the City Council for a 13-0 vote. Segal stated that once the document is formally transmitted to the City Council, there is a strict timeline set forth in Statute that must be followed.

Metge noted that originally Council members had concerns as to whether the necessary ordinances would be in place if the Plain Language Charter Revision was adopted. Segal stated that the amendment could contain language stating that the Revised Charter would take effect a year or two out in order to allow time for the necessary ordinances to be drafted.

Ferrara inquired if the Commission would schedule a session to review the recommended changes, inviting those affected by the changes such as the Park Board, etc. Clegg stated that the Commission would do so and would invite the City Attorney to be present, as well as former Commissioner Melendez who had volunteered his further assistance.

Ginder noted that Caroline Bachun, Assistant City Attorney, would continue to work with the Charter Commission on redistricting matters.

Clegg requested that any communications to the City Attorney outside regular meetings go through him.

Discussion

5. Report from Rules Committee: Report on meeting of January 13, 2011.

Schwarzkopf stated that the Rules Committee met on January 13 and will meet again to further refine the rules. They will have a final report at the March Charter Commission meeting.

Ferrara requested that the rules be available for review prior to the meeting if the Charter Commission will be voting on them at the March meeting.

6. Report from Advisory Group Selection Committee: Report on meetings of January 19 and January 25, 2011.

Sandberg summarized the documents created by the Advisory Group Selection Committee. The City's Communications Department reviewed and edited some of the documents to insure that the language was readable and understandable by the citizenry. They also created a news release to distribute when the applications are available on the City's Open Appointments website. The document formerly titled "Rules" was retitled "Guidelines", and it was decided that it would not need to be approved by the full Commission. The purpose of the FAQ (Minneapolis Redistricting Frequently Asked Questions) was to give applicants a taste of what redistricting is all about. The Communications Department will be putting out slides on Channel 79, providing News Bites for City Council newsletters, and sending out press notices to various neighborhood newspapers, as well as the StarTribune and the Journal. If there are requests for interviews, they will be directed to Commissioner Clegg. The Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP) will be providing translations and pushing the message out to neighborhood groups. The Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR) Department will also be using their resources and contacts to distribute information about the redistricting opportunity. The Clerk's Office is playing a role in processing the applications. The City Attorney's Office will determine whether alternates can be appointed to the Advisory Group.

7. Redistricting Advisory Group: Approve Application Form, Job Description, and Rules for Selecting Members of the Advisory Group, and direct the City Clerk's office to post notice of the vacancies on the City's Open Appointments website.

Sandberg moved that the Charter Commission approve: (1) the Application for Appointment to the Advisory Group for Minneapolis Redistricting 2011-2012 of the Minneapolis Charter Commission, and (2) the Job Description for the Advisory Group for Minneapolis Redistricting 2011-2012 for the Minneapolis Charter Commission and direct the City Clerk's Office to post notice of vacancies on the City's Open Appointments website and link the application form, job description, and FAQ on the Charter Commission website. Seconded.

Sandberg noted that the application form was organized to separate public from private information and also contained the language that "persons who have served as election judges since May 2009 are considered City employees and may not serve on the Advisory Group".

Lazarus inquired if the documents should point out that mere application does not guarantee appointment. Discussion ensued.

Clegg moved to amend the documents to add the statement "Application does not guarantee appointment" and allow Commissioner Sandberg discretion as to where to include it in the documents. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Jancik, Stade.

Metge inquired how the rule regarding election judges pertained to Charter Commissioners who were election judges. Clegg stated that the limitation only applied to eligibility to be on the Advisory Group, not to eligibility to be a Charter Commissioner.

Sandberg's motion that the Charter Commission approve: (1) the Application for Appointment to the Advisory Group for Minneapolis Redistricting 2011-2012 of the Minneapolis Charter Commission, and (2) the Job Description for the Advisory Group for Minneapolis Redistricting 2011-2012 for the Minneapolis Charter Commission, as amended to include the statement "Application does not guarantee appointment", was adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Jancik, Stade.

Sandberg's motion to direct the City Clerk's Office to post notice of vacancies on the City's Open Appointments website and link the application form, job description, and FAQ on the Charter Commission website, was adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Jancik, Stade.

Sandberg stated that the Advisory Group Selection Committee also wished to propose the creation of an Outreach Committee that would work not only with redistricting, but also in other ways to get the word out about the Charter Commission.

Lazarus was opposed to an Outreach Committee because there are accepted ways for the distribution of information that the City uses to publish what it needs to publish, and he felt the Commission should stay with that.

Ferrara was in favor of the idea. The Charter Commission needs to have an organized structure of communicating and direction from those who are more skilled at communicating.

Metge stated that at the last Advisory Group Selection Committee meeting, she was concerned about the direction the proposed Outreach Committee could take because they had originally discussed Charter Commissioners going out as a speaking panel, and she wouldn't want to put any individual Charter Commissioner in a position of misspeaking or answering questions without talking points. The City has vehicles of communication, and the Charter Commission needs to utilize those. However, if the purpose of an Outreach Committee is to monitor, review, and enhance the communication of the Charter

Commission through the vehicles of the City, with City Attorney review, utilizing Chair Clegg as the spokesperson, then she would be in favor of it.

Rubenstein stated that they were really discussing two things: (1) Strategy during the redistricting process to make sure that information and education goes out to the community; and (2) After redistricting is over, to communicate what the Charter Commission does. She suggested that if an Outreach Committee is created, that the committee form its own mission and strategy.

Clegg saw practical uses and functions of an Outreach Committee. For example, are there better ways that the Charter Commission could communicate that there is a vacancy and better ways to recruit new Commissioners? Does the Commission like their web page on the City's website? Should it be redesigned; and if so, what should be on it?

Ferrara stated that he was not concerned about having Charter Commissioners speak to the public on behalf of the Commission as long as they were provided with approved tools and information. The Charter Commission Chair shouldn't be burdened with being the only one who could speak for the Commission. There should be an organized effort to provide information to the community.

Lickness stated that last Fall, it had been discussed at Charter Commission meetings that it was not the Commission's job to advocate for the referendum. However, she saw it as the Charter Commission's job to educate and inform the voter regarding the referendum. Because the Charter Commission didn't do that, there was a lot of misinformation and a lot of discourse that wouldn't necessarily have happened if a solid educational effort had been put forth. An Outreach Committee would be able to provide education to the public on these issues.

Clegg suggested that the discussion be deferred to the next meeting. In the interim, he would draft a mission statement/functions that an Outreach Committee might undertake.

Pubic Commentary

Malcolm, 2121 South 9th Street, was present and stated that he thought one of the ongoing problems was semantics. There are a lot of people coming to the table with a perception of given words that were not appropriate, and he had questioned that. He thought things had gotten a little better, but that didn't mean there still wasn't room for improvement.

Vida Ditter, Bryn Mawr Neighborhood, was present and stated that last fall, in order to understand what the referendum meant, the Bryn Mawr neighborhood invited a spokesperson from the League of Women Voters to explain it. It would have been more meaningful if someone from the Charter Commission had spoken to them.

There was no one else present wishing to address the Charter Commission.

Lazarus moved to adjourn. Seconded.
Adopted upon a voice vote.
Absent - Jancik, Stade.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:02 p.m.

Peggy Menshek
Council Committee Coordinator