

Minneapolis Charter Commission Minutes

March 2, 2011 - 4:00 p.m.
Room 317 City Hall, Minneapolis, Minnesota

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

Also Present: Burt Osborne, Assistant City Attorney

1. Roll Call

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

2. Adopt Agenda

Lazarus moved adoption of the agenda. Seconded.

Clegg moved to amend the agenda to include under "Discussion" a new Item 7A: "Possible Role of Student Interns in the Redistricting Process". Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Dolan, Ferrara, Jancik.

The agenda, as amended, was adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Dolan, Ferrara, Jancik.

3. Approve minutes of regular meeting of February 2, 2011

Lazarus moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of February 2, 2011. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Dolan, Ferrara, Jancik.

4. Chair's Report

Clegg stated that the Open Appointments period for Commissioner Jancik's position closed on February 18, and the ten applications received had been forwarded to Judge Swenson. He also noted that a letter had been sent to the Chief Judge notifying him that the terms of Commissioners Clegg and Stade will expire in May. Commissioner Stade has indicated that he does not intend to seek reappointment. Commissioner Clegg did intend to seek reappointment, and his application letter had been forwarded to Judge Swenson.

Discussion

5. Report from Rules Committee:

Report on meeting of February 16, 2011.

Consideration and adoption of proposed Rules.

Schwarzkopf summarized the proposed Rules. An attorney from the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board had noted that the Charter specifically stated that before the final redistricting plan can be adopted, it must be submitted to the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board for their review and comment.

Schwarzkopf moved that Rule 14 be amended by adding a sentence at the end to read as follows: "Before adoption of Park and Recreation Districts, the Charter Commission shall notify the Park and Recreation Board of the proposed plan and consider any recommendations of the Park and Recreation Board, all in a manner consistent with the Charter". Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Dolan, Ferrara, Jancik.

The Rules Committee moved adoption of the proposed Rules, as amended.

Stade thought the threshold of a two-thirds vote to suspend or amend the rules (Rule 16) might be too high and suggested it be lowered to a majority vote.

Clegg suggested the rules of the Redistricting Group be consistent with the rules of the Charter Commission which require only an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Commissioners present and voting to amend or suspend the rules.

Sandberg moved that Rule 16 be amended to read as follows: "Once these rules are adopted by the Charter Commission, only the Charter Commission can suspend or amend these rules by a two-thirds vote of the Charter Commissioners present and voting. The Redistricting Group may recommend changes to the rules for adoption by the Charter Commission". Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Dolan, Ferrara, Jancik.

Rubenstein moved that the title be changed to "Procedural Rules for the Redistricting Group". Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Dolan, Ferrara, Jancik.

Peltola moved that adoption of the rules be postponed to the April meeting, at which time a public hearing would be held to receive public input regarding the proposed rules. Seconded.

Sandberg spoke in favor of the motion. The goal of the Commission is to be as open and transparent as possible.

Lickness spoke in favor of the motion. This would allow the public an opportunity to provide input.

Lazarus spoke in opposition to the motion. In order to make meaningful suggestions to amend the rules, the public would need to have been involved in the process from the beginning.

Connell agreed with Commissioner Lazarus. The committee had held several well publicized meetings, and the public had ample opportunity to participate in the development of the rules. If someone comes to the Commission at a later date with a reasonable suggestion to amend the rules, he was confident that at least two-thirds of the Commissioners present would be willing to entertain the change and vote to amend, if necessary.

The motion to postpone lost upon a voice vote.

Absent - Dolan, Ferrara, Jancik.

The rules, as amended, were adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Dolan, Ferrara, Jancik.

**6. Report from Advisory Group Selection Committee:
Report on meeting of March 1, 2011.**

Sandberg stated that the application, job description, and FAQ have been posted on the Open Appointments section of the City's website, as well as on the Charter Commission website. Information was distributed through the Communications Department and Neighborhood and Community Relations (NCR). To date, the Clerk's Office had received four applications from eligible applicants. The Communications Department and NCR will do another push midway in the process, but the Committee appealed to all Commissioners to get the word out about the opportunity to apply to become of a member of the Redistricting Advisory Group.

Interviews have been scheduled for April 5 and 7. If the second date is not needed, it will be cancelled. Following the last interview, the committee will convene to make a recommendation to the Charter Commission. The first page of the application form will be available to the public with any private data redacted. The second page of the application form contains private data and will only be available to the committee. Since the Recommended Principles for Redistricting state that all information on the application form will be public information, the committee recommended that the Principles be amended so they are consistent with the Data Practices Act.

Clegg stated that he would work with the City Attorney with respect to inconsistencies in the Principles regarding both the Rules and the Advisory Group procedures and bring proposed amendments to the April Charter Commission meeting for consideration.

**7. Outreach/Communication Committee:
Continue discussion of formation of a Charter Commission Outreach/Communication Committee.**

Clegg had created a proposed charter for the Outreach/Communication Committee for the Commission's consideration.

Sandberg stated that Commissioners Lickness and Ferrara were very interested in the topic and requested that they be allowed time to review the proposal and report back at the April meeting with additions or modifications.

Lazarus inquired if there would be funds available to place ads in neighborhood newspapers.

Lickness noted that the local neighborhood newspapers all received a press notice regarding the redistricting process and the Advisory Group positions. Many of them published the information, which was done free of charge.

**7A. Possible Role of Student Interns in the Redistricting Process.
Report by Commissioner Rubenstein**

Rubenstein stated that the Commission had previously discussed the possibility of having a law student or graduate student observe the redistricting process, record impressions, and make recommendations as to how the process might be improved in the future. She had contacted a professor who teaches election law at the University of Minnesota and also teaches public affairs at Hamline. He had students that would be very interested in doing this and asked if some type of job description could be given to the students. Rubenstein distributed a draft job description for the role of student interns in the redistricting process.

Clegg stated that the proposed job description would be placed on the April agenda for discussion, and Commissioner Rubenstein could provide the professor with a draft copy now.

Lazarus suggested that the document also be sent to the deans of Hamline, St. Thomas, the University of Minnesota, and William Mitchell when it is finalized.

Old Business

8. Plain Language Charter Revision:

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

Burt Osborne, Assistant City Attorney, stated that the review by the City Attorney's Office was nearly complete. They planned to present their final document, which contained what they hoped would be considered friendly amendments to the proposed Plain Language Charter, to the Committee of the Whole at their March 31 meeting. The documents will then be sent to the Charter Commission and may be available for the April 6 Charter Commission meeting for discussion.

Pubic Commentary

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

Lazarus moved to adjourn. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Dolan, Ferrara, Jancik.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 4:50 p.m.

Peggy Menshek
Council Committee Coordinator