

## Minutes Charter Review: Audience Participation

April 21, 2015

### General Ideas Presented

Tim Schwanger:

- Didn't see minutes or public meetings advertised.
- 90% of ideas they're presenting have been discussed and voted on in the past. It would behoove the committee to leave term limits alone.
- Encourage looking at some type of ward system: currently neighborhoods are not adequately represented.
- Keep commission approval for costs over \$10,000- as a tax payer he wants to know where every single tax dollar is going.

Discussion that ensued:

Tim Schwanger, Mike Will, Mike Meinzer, Dan Kaman discussed missing \$100,000 check from finance department in years past.

- Dan Kaman: Commissioners are asked to ask difficult questions for a PT, low cost position. It was an awkward situation and the center seat (commission president seat) is a hot seat. Publically asked 3 times about this missing check.
- Mike Meinzer: Finance currently doesn't report to the City Manager. He has no obligation to tell him under current system.
- Mike Will: Would the situation be different under a different organizational structure?

Sharon Johnson:

- After serving 3 times, it's been noticed how Charter review always discusses same topics.
- Mayor/ward system: It all depends on the individuals that get elected. Don't spend too much time on the topic.
- 2 term limit is good for the city- it provides for fresh ideas and views. If introduce new ideas, the city is divided but it will be hard to shoot down.
- Increasing commission approval to costs over \$15,000 will get out of control if the budget gets tight. Perhaps it should be less?
- If decrease the current commission from 7 individuals to 5 individuals, you're left with a commission that is all business people. Who represents the average resident?

Beverly Newell Hancock:

- (Larger discussion about the Human Relations Commission, its current role, and its purpose). Take away: Either finance HRC and give it teeth to do its purpose or eliminate it all together- don't have the façade of having a commission that handles problems between residents and city, but give it no power.
- Residents need a board, independent of City and City Commission to take care of issues & complaints between residents and City.

- In order to address this, have Charter Review create a citizen review board.
- (Dannie Edmon piggybacking off this idea): Look into Mansfield as an example of established HRC. Current HRC is not able to intervene until investigations are complete—by then there is no point.
- Police and Andre Stockett used as examples

Dannie Edmon:

- 4 charter officers are used a checks and balances system. The City Manager role is currently held to a higher level than other four roles- and given special treatment (severance pay, contract language different, etc.) when other positions are at will. Either hold all charter officers to same standards and scrutiny or change to operate under a mayor form of government.
- Version of ward and at large commission structure would be the best representation of City: Current commission structure allows for all the power to be on the east side of City. Wards only also has disadvantages.
- Would like to see more negotiations and compromise from commission rather than strong arm tactics
- Perhaps more regular commission meetings (weekly) to ensure better communication

Mike Zuilhof:

- Interesting discussion on power dynamics of city structure.
- Encourages the Charter Review committee to make sure they're solving right problem and not getting fixated on one idea.
- Also not, people are more likely to exercise power when they're unhappy.
- Best thing we can do is help people understand their form of government
- Term limits are a bad idea: Commissioner is entry level position- takes one term to become good at your job. People can't reelect great commissioners.

Discussion between Mike Zuilhof, Dannie Edmon, Dan Kaman, Milke Will, Mike Meizner took place:

- How do we ensure checks and balances? Make system run smoother?
- To balance power structure: let commissions & committees exercise more power. Use committees to do work of city.

Next meeting first Tuesday of May, experts from other cities will be present.

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Kelly L. Kresser, CMC  
Clerk of the City Commission

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Michael J. Will  
Chairperson

