

# Charter Review Commission

Meeting Minutes

July 28, 2011

## **Members in Attendance:**

Brigidanne Flynn

Barbara J. Smith

Susan Smith

Tom Murphy

Jack Penney

Pauline Dillard

## **Members Absent:**

Charles Woodard

Isaac Diggs

Decora Sandiford

Mary Ann Prokosch

## **Consultants:**

Jonathan Drapkin, Director, Pattern for Progress

## **Staff:**

Corporation Counsel Michelle Kelson

Administrative Assistant Ann Kuzmik

Vice Chairman Brigidanne Flynn called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. and led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

## **AGENDA ITEMS:**

Minutes of the 714/11 meeting were approved unanimously.

Brigidanne Flynn presented two power point presentations on the proposed Charter Revisions, one for the public, and one for the City Council.

She noted that Tom Murphy is working on a basic “script” for Commission members that all could use when making presentations or answering questions. For example, one question that came up was how much it would cost if the Council was increased; another is why the Commission did not recommend term limits.

Following Commission review of the presentations, Jack Penney raised the question of the legality of ending the terms for those elected in 2011 in 2013- he said he had checked with the Orange County Board of Elections and was told that the four-year terms could not be ended after only two years. He said this would be the first legal test for the Charter revisions should they be approved.

Corporation Counsel Michelle Kelson said she would research the question in election law and case law, and also explore other possibilities.

She then suggested that the Commission consider changing their proposed revisions so that the Mayor and two Council people elected at-large in 2011 would serve their four year terms; and that in 2013, only the four additional Council people would be elected by ward.

If the Commission decided to go with these changes, she pointed out they would need to schedule another meeting to vote on amendments to previously passed resolutions and revisions to Mr. Steinman’s report. Consensus of the Commission seemed to support Ms. Kelson’s suggested changes, which would also provide for staggered terms as they had indicated they wanted. Jack Penney said that it would be a cost savings in terms of the election as well.

Discussion then returned to presenting the Charter Review Commission's recommendations and answering the public's questions. Susan Smith suggested doing a survey to get feedback from the public.

Following this discussion, Tom Murphy asked for clarification and a report of Pattern for Progress's work on exploring consolidation of services. Ms. Kelson explained that there were meetings among City staff, and Pattern had gone to various departments to observe. Pattern's recommendations would be more operational, and would likely not require Charter revisions subject to mandatory referendum. The report is not yet complete. Mr. Murphy noted he was not advised Pattern had met with department heads, and he would have liked to have been a part of it.

Several Commission members noted that given the limited amount of time and resources, the focus had been in getting the Charter revisions they had proposed concerning the ward system and the hiring/firing of the City Manager on the ballot.

The Commission tentatively set another meeting for August 18 at 7 p.m. The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.