

CHARTER REVISION BOARD MINUTES
Citizen Outreach Meeting
Mizell Center
1409 Sistrunk Boulevard
City of Fort Lauderdale
Monday, March 15, 2004 – 6:30 p.m.

	Attendance	Cumulative Attendance	
		Present	Absent
Chair Dan Lewis	P	4	0
James D. Camp	P	4	0
Chris Fertig	P	2	2
John M. Milledge	P	4	0
Ron Gunzburger	P	4	0

City Staff in Attendance

Mayor Jim Naugle
City Commissioner Carlton Moore
Alan Silva, Acting City Manager
Harry Stewart, City Attorney
Terry Sharp, Director of Finance
Leslie Backus, Director of Communications
Jeff Modarelli, Assistant City Clerk
Lisa Edmondson, Recording Clerk

CITIZEN OUTREACH MEETING

Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He provided an introduction to the Charter, the process of Charter review, the Board, and its purpose. He stated the Board would be reviewing the Charter and making recommendations to the City Commission. Community outreach will be held during months of March and April, after which the Board, along with City staff, will make their recommendations to the City Commission.

Chair Lewis along with the consensus of the Board asked that staff send out a letter to all City Boards requesting their input regarding the Charter and extending invitations to attend meetings.

Mr. William Dandy spoke in favor of a professional, qualified manager running the City hired by the Commission, with the City Commission solely responsible for setting policy. He asserted that the current number of Commissioners is satisfactory to adequately represent the citizens.

Commissioner Moore thanked the Board for their participation and made the following points:

- A manager form of government is the most appropriate format.

- There should be an increase of the number of Commissioners upon incremental increases and shifts in population.
- Term limits are unnecessary and should be removed from the Charter.

Ms. Margaret Haynie Birch asked if it would be possible to write specific minimum qualifications into the Charter for hiring a city manager, although she agreed that requiring the Commission to create the job description and qualifications at the time the position is advertised may be a more flexible solution. She also questioned voting procedure in that the Mayor votes last, suggesting that there be a rotation among the Commissioners. She felt that the current form of government should remain.

Ms. Phyllis Barry agreed that there should be some level of professional standards in the Charter for hiring a city manager.

Commissioner Moore continued his points as follows:

- There should be minimum requirements for hiring a city manager in the Charter; however, he stated he would anticipate Charter reviews in the future which would update the qualifications to the current standards of the day.
- The Commission should be removed from the appointment process of a City Clerk, leaving the hiring of that position to the city manager.
- City Commission salaries should be subject to controls not to exceed 50% of the salary of a Broward County Commissioner.
- Commissioners should receive a pension.
- Land use issues should be dealt with solely by the municipal policy makers in the City.
- There should be a clear definition for City “parks” outlined in the Charter.
- The “trip” to increase the number of elected officials should be approximately 200,000 additional residents.
- There should be no change in term length.
- City auditors should be appointed by the city manager, not the Commission.
- Commission at-large seats would create a “dysfunctional dynamic.”
- The Mayor should be included in voting rotation on each issue before the Commission.
- Roberts Rules of Order should be followed during City Commission meetings.

Chair Lewis advised that written comments to the Board would be accepted, pointing out there is a link on the City’s website for comments regarding Charter Revisions.

Mr. Fred Taylor provided a folder to the Board with his suggestions as follows:

- An independent City auditor should be elected by the voters.
- The Commission should be comprised of the Mayor, one Commissioner at-large, and five District Commissioners.

- All Commission seats should be full time, with participation in outside businesses prohibited while in office.
- The Mayor should be the highest compensated City official.
- Appointed of a City Manager would be for a three-year term with forced removal only after gross or unlawful misconduct after conviction in a court of law.
- All departments report to the City Commission each month, answering questions regarding the state of their departments including contracts, employees, and finances.

Ms. Leola McCoy agreed that the current qualifications for city manager were weak and stringent guidelines are needed. She also stressed the necessity of more accountability from the city manager. Ms. McCoy felt there should be a mechanism in the Charter to “punish bad behavior.” She did not agree with longevity pay stating it should be abolished and spoke in favor of a strong mayor. She agreed with imposing the same qualifications upon a strong mayor as would be expected of a city manager. She opposed adding additional Commission seats.

Ms. Pamela Adams pointed out that they should remain mindful of its purpose and not burden the Charter with administrative details. She spoke in favor of minimum guidelines for a city manager in the Charter, against a strong mayor, and against term limits. She did not believe that the Charter should mandate length of employment of a city manager.

Chair Lewis suggested that the Charter could command that the Commission establish the rules and qualifications for the city manager. He asked that members of the city manager hiring committee make suggestions to the Board of proposed minimum requirements.

The next Charter Revision Board meeting will be held on Monday, March 29, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. at the Beach Community Center.

Thereupon the meeting concluded at 8:10 p.m.