



# CLEVELAND HEIGHTS

## **Charter Review Commission**

**August 2, 2023**

**6:00 PM**

**City Hall – Executive Conference Room**

### **Minutes**

**1) Call to Order**

Chair Linda Stiefsky called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

**2) Roll Call**

Present: Linda Striefsky, Guy Thellian, Jonathan Ciesla, Roland Anglin, Drew Herzig, and Stephanie Morris

Late: Graig Kluge (6:15 PM) and Graham Ball (6:28 PM)

Absent: Harriet Applegate (information attendance via Zoom, left Zoom call at 6:30)

At request of Chair, Vice Chair Jonathan Ciesla agrees to take minutes in Secretary's absence. After Graham enters, determined Graham and Jonathan will collaborate for final minutes for Commission review and approval.

**3) Approval of Minutes of Prior Meeting**

Roland requests under Item 7) Adjourn that minute be corrected to Chair as there is only one.

Motion to approve 1<sup>st</sup> Roland 2<sup>nd</sup> Jonathan, passes without objection.

**4) Law Director Hanna – Sunshine Law Issues**

Discussion and review of Ohio's Sunshine Laws: Ohio's Public Records and Open Meetings Act. Commission members received clarity on what a public meeting is, how business must be deliberated, what a public record is, and the consequences of violating the laws.

Process for communication between the Commission and the City will take place through Clerk of Council Addie Balester.

**5) Consideration of Presenter(s) for Overview of City Charters and Charter Review Process**

**a. Roland Anglin made some inquiries on this and will report for the CRC's consideration**

Roland is gathering information from his professional network with experience in reviewing city charters. Possibility to bring in experts to provide advice about charters. He will provide a wrap-up by next meeting (August 16th).



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**6) Consideration of Planning for Meeting (perhaps in a month or so) to Provide Information on CRC Process and Seek Input from Cleveland Heights Residents**

Chair raised idea of having a public input meeting. Discussion occurred and members all agreed that currently more information is needed before any action can be taken; however, engaging citizens is important.

**7) Commence Compilation of List of Charter Amendment Topics for Consideration (see LAS draft chart)**

Chair presented overview matrix comparing different charters. Commission then held brainstorm session to list all potential items for consideration.

- Rank choice voting
- Entire charter gender neutral and modernized language
- General clean-up of language to reflect a mayoral style charter rather than city manager
- At-Large vs Wards model for City Council
- Modernize application of technology - such as regrading video conferencing
- Overview of charter vs. ordinance
- Charter amendment process
- Referendum process
- Recall process
- Balance of power between City Council and Mayor
- Right of inquiry
- Sanctuary city
- Training requirements for elected officials including civic, legal, and diversity, equity, and inclusion
- Ethics for department heads, Mayor, and City Council
- Conflict of interest
- Charter Model: Consider if we want to adjust current charter created for City Manager or draft a new charter for the Mayor
- Filling vacancies on City Council
- Rules of meeting conduct, council improvements, procedure requirements

**8) Consider Needs for Advice, whether from Facilitator, Legal Counsel, other expert(s)**

Discussion surrounding need for assistance. Talked about when to engage Council to begin facilitator budgeting and search process. Considered that Roland will be organizing an overview presentation on charters which will help the Commission to understand what type of advice is needed. Noted at it will take some time to hire a Facilitator. Noted that national League of Cities may be able to provide legal support via phone on demand. Noted that City Council may need to allocate funds in the budget. Noted that experts in charters and ethics could be beneficial. Decided that CRC will wait for more research to be done on potential Facilitators before submitting a request to City Council.



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Note: Not clear what the budget for the Commission is, but City Council has a budget of \$30,000 for legal and expert advice. Previously the adviser was paid a flat fee, might be an hourly fee going forward.

Note: Should the Commission proceed with consensus or with majority vote?  
Decision reached that Commission will proceed with majority vote of commissioners in attendance if there is a quorum.

## 9) **Commence Development of List of City Elected Officials or City Staff from Whom We Would Like Input**

Discussion recognizing need for technical assistance from experienced professionals. Listed some individuals and places information will be collected from:

- Current Mayor
- Cleveland Heights City Council - current and former
- City administrative staff
- Department heads of Planning and Development and Finance
- Superintendent and/or school board
- University Heights Mayor
- Former Shaker Heights Mayor
- University Heights Charter Review Commission members
- Municipal Court Judge
- Forrest Hills Home Owners Association
- Future Height
- Local business owners and merchants

Note: Extra meetings may be needed to receive input and stay on schedule.

## 10) **Review of Meeting Action Items**

- Hand-outs will be provided by City for all but Vice Chair, who requested digital copies only.
- City to locate and distribute prior commission records
  - Specifically, City will send out prior charter text, in whole, as proposed by prior commission
  - Noted that prior commission's website should be procured
- Roland has graciously volunteered to investigate potential experts to present on charters and the charter review process.
- Jonathan and Graham will unify minutes and send to Addie.
- Linda will send out a request for agenda items and then send the agenda.
- Linda to complete comparison matrix
- All members to review current charter and become familiar with sections, considering whether to recommend changes to existing charter or to draft a new charter.
- Chair will send out an agenda and then solicit comments



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**11) Review of Meeting for Lessons Learned**

Drew spoke up regarding a comment made last meeting which characterized a type of deliberation as “OCD”. Drew requested a higher level of awareness and respect from all Commissioners going forward. He has suffered from OCD from his entire adult life and that this matter is of personal importance to him. All attendees agreed and thanked him for his contribution.

**12) Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 16 at 6 PM**

**13) Adjourn**

Chair adjourns meeting at 7:54 PM.