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2023 Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission

Survey for Mayor and City Council

We all recognize that changes have made to the Charter to effect and reflect an elected mayor form of government. The charge to this Commission is to review the Charter and develop recommendations for amendments, if any, in the best interest of the City. This consideration is to include whether amendments are necessary or advisable, to better and further implement the Mayor-Council form of government. The Commission is also charged to review the 2019 final report of the 2019 Commission.

For each category below, please consider further changes to the Charter that, in your opinion, the Charter Review Commission should consider, without necessarily implying that you would make such a change.

- 1. What are the most important changes to the Charter that you would like to see as a result of this Charter review process?**
 - Strengthen language re Council's right to inquiry
 - Adopt Ranked Choice Voting (RCV)
 - Establish right to information, unless otherwise prohibited by law, for elected, but not sworn in, officials
- 2. What changes, if any, should be considered regarding the balance of powers between the Mayor and City Council? For example:**
 - a. There has been debate concerning the extent to which members of City Council may request information from, or communicate with, "the administrative service". This is a carry-over from the prior Cleveland Heights City Charter, for a city manager form of government. Should the existing Charter text, permitting requests only for "the purpose of inquiry", be deleted, or should the charter otherwise address the process by which City Council members request information from City departments and accountability for responses to such requests?
 - i. Language re inquiry should be strengthened, not deleted
 - b. Should the Charter be modified as to the authority to establish or determine the organization and duties of each department?

- i. No position
- c. Should the Charter be modified to require City Council approval for hiring of directors beyond the Directors of Law and Finance?
 - i. Yes, it would be appropriate for Council to have an advice and consent role
- d. Currently, the Mayor appoints the Civil Service Commission, subject to City Council approval, and the City Council appoints the Planning Commission. Should the method of appointment to the City commissions be changed?
 - i. Appointments would be more diverse if they were made by both Council and the Mayor, instead of by just the Mayor. For this reason, I generally believe that appointments for any given body should be made jointly by Council and the Mayor
- e. The method of filling vacancies on City Council was changed in 2022. Are any further changes needed?
 - i. The process resulted in gridlock in 2023, but no particular changes come to mind
- f. Do you recommend consideration of other changes as to the balance of powers?

Please briefly explain the reasons for your answers.

- 3. If not included in your responses above, do you think that the Commission should consider these changes:
 - a. Adopt Ranked Choice Voting
 - i. I strongly support the use of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for Council and Mayoral races.
 - b. Change the way City Council is elected - change to electing City Council by wards or by a hybrid method of wards and at large, as opposed to retaining at large
 - i. While I initially supported a hybrid method, I am now inclined to keep our current system. I have been advised that ward-based systems often lead to council members being territorial. I feel that all council members should feel a sense of responsibility for all areas of the City.
 - c. Add to the Charter provisions as to ethics expectations for the Mayor, City Council and Department Heads and training for the Mayor and City Council
 - i. Not opposed to such a provision
 - d. Add a comprehensive nondiscrimination policy statement
 - i. Not opposed this such a statement
 - e. Add provisions to protect the rights of residents without citizenship, such as sanctuary city status
 - i. Not opposed to such a provision

Please briefly explain the reasons for your answers.

4. As to the final report of the 2019 Charter Review Commission, are there particular changes recommended in that report (apart from any relating to the City Manager), which you recommend that the current Commission consider?
- a. In particular, should these changes be considered:
- i. Gender neutral language and modernized language
1. Yes
 - ii. Initiative, recall and referendum provisions
1. Yes
 - iii. Charter review timing
1. If this is in reference to the ten-year proposal, I have no position
 - iv. Changes to provisions on finances and budgeting
1. It seems appropriate that it would be revised to more accurately reflect the existing process, but I do not have enough time to take a position.
- b. Are there any other recommendations from the 2019 Final Report that you recommend be considered by the current Commission?

Please briefly explain the reasons for your answers.