



City of Cleveland Heights

Charter Review Commission

Decisions and Rationales

1 February 2018
Council Chambers
Cleveland Heights City Hall

Charter Review Commission: Present; Patricia Ajdukiewicz, Craig Cobb, Michael Gaynier, Randy Keller, Howard Maier, John Newman, Jr., Chair, Carla Rautenberg, Vince Reddy, Maia Rucker, Katherine Solender, James Vail, Sarah West. Absent: Jessica Cohen, David Perelman, Allosious Snodgrass.

1. Acceptance of Decisions and Rationales from 18 January 2018

Moved and seconded to accept the amended Decisions and Rationales 18 January 2018.
Accepted unanimously.

2. Facilitator's E-Mail Address on Charter Review Commission website

The Commission agreed to have the E-Mail address of the Facilitator on the website as the contact information of the Commission.

3. Map of both the five Wards and Residential addresses of Councilmembers since 1980

Susanna O'Neil distributed a map of Cleveland Heights with the five wards used for voting and the residential addresses of members of Council for each decade starting with 1980. Interestingly, the residential addresses of members of Council were distributed in all wards of the city.

4. Salaries of Members of Council

The salaries of members of Council have not changed since 1982. The City will provide the information. The Facilitator noted that in Lakewood, the Civil Service Commission recommends the salaries of both the council and mayor every four years in presidential election years. Unless declined by action of council within 90 days, the recommendations take effect. The provision in the Lakewood City Charter will be in the next **Submissions to the Commission** document.

5. Presentation by Melissa Yasinow, Vice Mayor

After thanking the members of the Commission for their service, the Vice Mayor noted the benefits of at-large elections. City-wide campaigns and responsibilities avoid NIMBY (Not in my back yard) politics and require candidates to visit all parts of the city. The candidates experience the diversity of the city first-hand. Concerned about politics focusing on individuals not issues, such as an exiting ward councilmember in Cleveland depriving his successor of ward funds. Also concerned about a strong mayor having the ability to practice personal politics against members of council. She noted a mayor who refused to implement a funded decision of the council. This would unlikely happen in a Council-Manager system as the city manager implements council decisions and can be removed if she/he does not.

All councilmembers deal with all issues and concerns, such as providing city funding for a traffic signal that ODOT stated was not needed. The traffic signal allowed students to cross a street to school without having to go to a busy intersection. The Vice Mayor did not see any particular group or place harmed in the current system. A part-time seven-member council working with a city manager can create and implement a vision for the city. The system provides flexibility in achieving goals by strategically determining who needs to participate in each activity such as recruiting development. The system provides administrators, elected officials and the city manager who can participate strategically.

The city manager is expected to bring ideas to the table as would a not-for-profit CEO who works with the board to achieve goals. The city manager is also expected to be active in policy generation and sell the vision as is done in a parliamentary system. The evaluation of the city manager is serious and can be carefully done. Though evaluation can be uncomfortable, the council can confront the city manager if it is dissatisfied as the council can dismiss the manager.

The voters could potentially elect the mayor in the current form of government, to be the council leader and set its agenda, but she thinks it's better to have the Council select its own leader. Previously, the mayor refused to represent the Council and wanted to be a strong mayor. Charter review was an outcome of this circumstance.

In terms of bias, the Vice Mayor stated all campaign finances reports are available. The process for ascertaining campaign finance is under the County Board of Elections. As a footnote, the source for finding information on campaign finance will be shared with the Commission in the next **Submissions to the Commissions**.

6. Presentation of Mary Dunbar, Member of Council

Councilmember Dunbar noted that other issues were a priority in 2012, the last charter specified time for charter review. The councilmember perceived the city manager on a learning curve politically but with priorities emerging and the city prioritizing going forward. Some issues arose from leadership succession, replacing a leader who served more than two decades. There is discontent generally with government, not just in Cleveland Heights, and that the city is an illustration of a wider situation in the country in which some have done well and others not. Loss of population and revenue are major issues. One result was loss of staff which hurt getting the message out. With added staff and better internal and external governance, we are getting the message out better. Innovative policies are needed, and these are not issues of a form of government.

She prefers collaborative governance and sees it happening under the new Mayor. Sees service as incentive to participate in government not money and worries about the cost of some alternatives to current system of governance. Generating an effective message about housing, diversity and other strengths of the city is happening.

7. Next Speakers to the Commission

After some discussion, it was decided to invite Dennis Wilcox, a former mayor; Earl Leiken, Mayor of Shaker Heights; and Tom Wagner, member of the 2014 Lakewood Charter Commission who supported changing the form of the Lakewood government from a Strong Mayor system to a Council-Manager system. If one or more cannot make the next Commission meeting, they will be invited to a subsequent meeting. Others on a list discussed at the last meeting will then be invited to the next meeting.

8. Meeting Date 5 April changed to 29 March

As the first Thursday of April, 5 April, is during the celebration of Passover, the Commission decided to meet the fifth Thursday of March, 29 March, by unanimous consent. The Facilitator will change the Charter Review Calendar accordingly.

9. Public Comment

Three persons presented public comments. Bob Brown contended that the form of government hindered progress. He contended that the Council-Manager system was for communities without problems. He argued that having a strong mayor does not mean the government is unprofessional. Rather a strong mayor can help developers work with the city. The second speaker, Sandy Moran, questioned if part-time council is sufficient. The third speaker, Tony Cuda, spoke for the need for officials representing the city to be elected.

10. Adjournment

Committee agreed by consent to adjourn after the last public comment.