



# City of Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission

## Decisions and Rationales - Revised

15 March 2018  
Council Chambers  
Cleveland Heights City Hall

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

### 1. Acceptance of Decisions and Rationales from 1 March 2018

Moved and seconded to accept the Decisions and Rationales 1 March 2018.  
Accepted unanimously.

### 2. Discussion among Commission Members regarding interim status of Thinking on Manager/Mayor and Council Items

Howard Maier had prepared what he believed could be considered a stage-setting presentation for member comments on form-of-government issues, and so it was agreed that he should speak first. He offered a condensed overview of city circumstances that had been the subject of comment before the Commission, presented a Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/ Threats analysis, listed certain goals he believed the Commission should have in mind as its work proceeded, and mentioned certain structural options that appeared open for consideration.

Thereafter, proceeding alphabetically following "M," the Commission members spoke at varying lengths and with varying specificity and certainty on their thoughts concerning form of government, in light of the information put before the Commission to date. Views were expressed and considerations offered on retention of the present system versus changes of varying types and degrees, with some members leaning one way, some another, and some not expressing a tendency. For executive leadership, there were references to professional city management, a directly elected mayor, and some amalgam of professional appointment and political choice. As to the legislative function,

there were comments on at-large election, election by wards, and (again, as with respect to executive leadership) some combination of the two.

Concepts and notions raised by one or more Commission members included such matters as, in no particular order, democracy as a philosophical element; separation of powers; compensation of council members; council procedures and handling vacancies; the part-time nature of council and its implications for the exercise of governing power; clarification as to where governing power lies, including as regards titles; effective communication and marketing by the city about its strong points and opportunities; greater or lesser authority for a city manager; and the relative impact of structure versus personnel on effective governance of the city.

There was no apparent disagreement on the generally good quality of basic city services; on the importance of both maintaining and, where possible, enhancing them; or on the need for vision and effective leadership in executing on the newly adopted Master Plan and in particular dealing with such challenging matters as economic (re)development and housing issues. There was, however, no consensus, even preliminary, on whether the data thus far on the record – significant but yet well short of complete as it is at this stage -- would tend to favor one form of government over another (let alone favor some particular combination of sub-features of any specific form) as most likely to foster achievement of the desired objectives.

Following this process of structured, seriatim comments, it was agreed not to have further discussion immediately but instead to set aside a maximum of twenty minutes at the next meeting for unstructured comment and discussion, to the extent a member or members wished to speak.

### 3. Report/Discussion concerning planning of Community Meeting

It was determined to pass over items 3A, 3B, 3C and 4 on the agenda for the time being in favor of item 3D, a report on the planning for the community meeting to be held on April 19.

It was agreed to proceed with a small group discussion format and associated reporting out by each group at the session, with three questions for discussion, generally as set forth on the Proposed Program for the Public Forum, which was in front of the members and is attached hereto as Appendix A. Members of the Commission will be expected to attend and potentially act as table facilitators for the discussions but without being directive. It was agreed that there should also be an opportunity for community members to express their views in writing, including online, without having to attend the meeting, the timing and other details yet to be determined. Eventually, there would be a

report collating results of all inputs from the overall process. The importance of broad and effective public notice of the overall program was acknowledged, and will be undertaken generally along the lines of current publicity for Commission meetings, perhaps to be supplemented in certain respects.

#### 4. Consideration of further commission activity and projected timing

It was determined to pass over item 4 on the agenda for the time being in favor of item 5 concerning further commission work. A plan (as set forth on Appendix B hereto) for that further work, including projected timing, was presented and discussed. There was consensus that, at least as current circumstances would suggest, the proposed plan would provide an acceptable framework for moving forward.

#### 5. Public Comment

Nine persons presented public comments. Deborah Van Kleef spoke regarding presenting voters with a choice of two options for form of government and regarding ward representation. Len Friedson spoke generally regarding his assessment of Commission members' comments earlier in the session and the historically based notion of including democratic concepts within the Commission's considerations. Sue Dyke spoke on issues of city government accountability to voters. Tony Cuda spoke regarding a directly elected mayor, voter rights, democracy versus expediency, leadership/vision in Cleveland Heights, survey methods, and the probability of a citizen ballot initiative for change of government if such a change were not put on the ballot via the Commission process. Michael Bennett spoke regarding the proposed community meeting process and related publicity methods, and the plan/timing for further Commission work including issues other than just form of government. R. Tadd Pinkston spoke on rank choice voting and proportional representation; hybrid forms of government; and his personal publicity efforts. Diane Hallum spoke about council procedures, ward representation and issues of communication by city government. Bob Brown spoke about the recent status of publicity concerning Commission meetings and the plan for the April 19 community meeting. Melissa Yasinow spoke concerning a recent news article dealing with a situation in Cleveland involving inter-ward competition for resources.

#### 6. Adjournment

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

Appendix A  
Proposed Community Meeting Program



# City of Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission

## **Proposed Program for the Community Meeting**

This document outlines the proposed plan for a community meeting on April 19th as part of the Charter Review Commission deliberations.

As per the suggestion of Katie Solender, we propose a community meeting that will be held on April 19th, from 7-9:30pm at the Cleveland Heights Community Center. This community meeting will use a small group discussion format.

### Meeting Purpose:

- To provide information about the contents of the current CH charter;
- To review common models of local government currently in use in Ohio and the U.S., including the strengths and deficits of each model;
- To provide an opportunity for collaborative reflection on our current form of local government and whether changing it would improve the quality of life in our city.

### Proposed Agenda:

- Welcome remarks and introduction of CRC members – Jack Newman
- Presentation - Charter Review Commission members and Forms of Government – Dr. Larry Keller
- Group Exercises and Report Outs - Facilitated by Katie Solender
- Next Steps and Closing Remarks - Jack Newman

We propose the following timeline for the meeting:

7-7:05 p.m. - Welcome

7:05 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. - Presentation on CRC and forms of government

7:30 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. - Table introductions and group exercise instructions/group agreements

7:45 p.m. to 8:05 p.m. - 1st Question Discussion

8:05 p.m. to 8:20 p.m. - Report Out

8:20 p.m. to 8:35 p.m. - 2nd Question Discussion

8:35 p.m. to 8:50 p.m. - Report Out

8:50 p.m. to 9:05 p.m. - 3rd Question Discussion

9:05 p.m. to 9:20 p.m. - Report Out

9:20 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Next Steps and Closing Remarks

We propose adopting the following group agreements:

- Focus on the meeting purpose
- Actively engaged
- Actively listening
- Stay committed to the process
- Strive to share new and relevant information to the group

Proposed questions for discussion:

- What type of government do you prefer for Cleveland Heights and why?
- What other elements that should be added or changed to improve local government?
- What are the three most important qualities you want to see in local government?

Appendix B  
Commission Plan for Continued Work



# City of Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission

## PLAN FOR CONTINUED WORK

### Phase 1 -- Data Gathering (through May)

Activities through April have already been set – discussion on interim thinking and planning; interviews of Messrs. Hilf, Presser and Zagara; community meeting and possible associated survey

Additional activities to include a developer roundtable; individual sessions with a Mentor representative, Brenda May (Noble Neighbors), Tom Malone (former finance director of CH and other cities), Karen Knittel (CH master plan); others?

### Phase 2 -- Assessment of Major Items (June)

Discussion and voting to set operating conclusions, in principle, as to major items (elected mayor or not; structure of council elections) as well as all associated features essential to understanding what the form will actually involve (distribution of power, etc.); assignment to commission member or small collection of members to work with law department on drafting charter language implementing the principles decided and preparing the related segment of the report to council.

Proposed drafts then to be discussed at subsequent meetings, including in later phases as timing dictates.

### Phase 3 -- Consideration of Additional Items (July/August)

Discussion and voting to set operating conclusions, in principle, as to sections of the charter other than those covering phase 2 items.

When each segment or logically related set of segments is determined, assignment to a commission member or small collection of members for same purposes regarding that segment or set of segments in the same manner as described in Phase 2 above for the major items, with drafts to be discussed at subsequent meetings.

Phase 4 – Completion and Consideration of Integrated Draft and Report  
(September/October)

Assignment to a commission member or a small collection of members to assemble all segments of the newly proposed charter into an integrated whole, for consideration and approval by the commission, and use as the basis for a public hearing.

Public hearing.

Preparation of, and voting on, any adjustments to the proposed charter prompted by the public hearing. Completion of, and voting on, the accompanying report to council.

Phase 5 -- Delivery to Council (early November)

Newly proposed charter and accompanying report delivered to council.