

**Community Meeting**  
**Form of Government Discussion**  
**April 19, 2018**

**Charter Review Commission**



# Welcome

**John Newman Jr.**

Chair, Charter Review Commission

**Charter Review Commission**



# Commission Members

- Patrycja Ajdukiewicz
- Jessica Cohen
- Craig Cobb
- Michael Gaynier
- C. Randolph Keller
- Howard Maier
- John Newman Jr.
- David Perelman
- Carla Rautenberg
- Vince Reddy
- Maia Rucker
- Allosious Snodgrass
- Katherine Solender
- James Vail
- Sarah West

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# Meeting Purposes

- To provide information about the contents of the current Cleveland Heights 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

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# Meeting Outline

- Welcome, introductions, and context
- Overview of Different Forms of Local Government
- Group Discussions and Reporting Out
- Next Steps and Concluding Comments



# Introduction to the City Charter & Review Process

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# What is the Charter?

- Primary governing document for home rule cities
- A city charter is like a constitution
- Defines the relationship between the community and its government
- Charters, and any and all changes to them, must be approved by voters



# Core Elements of a Municipal Charter

- Form of government
- Structure, process, and roles of city council
- Other offices of government and their relation to council and the chief executive
- Financial requirements and processes
- Elections, initiative, and referendum
- Ethics, both substance and process
- Roles and processes for citizen participation
- Training and development of officeholders



# Charter Review Process

- 15-member body, appointed by city council from among residents who applied
- Every geographic area of the city represented
- Charged with reviewing the city charter (the last review was in 1982) and determining if any changes are needed
- May propose amendments or a full re-write
- Recommended revisions are presented to city council
- Council may accept any changes, or none
- Any changes must then be approved by voters



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# Guiding Principles for the Commission

- The key question: **What is in the best interest of the City of Cleveland Heights?**
- As the commission considers changing the city's form of government, it is also looking at the following:
  - What is the problem we are trying to solve?
  - How would a change affect issues of representation, policy, leadership, and administrative efficiency?
  - What are the consequences of change?
- **The commission is committed to an open, fair, and impartial process and encourages community input.**



# Forms of Government

**Dr. Larry Keller**

Associate Professor Emeritus,  
Levin College of Urban Affairs, CSU  
Charter Review Commission Facilitator

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# Forms of Municipal Government

- Decisions on the form of government are the most critical, with implications for all of the charter
- Forms of government are significant, but like charters generally, don't solve community problems
- Forms of government do create political cultures - environments that can facilitate a community dealing with its problems and building a better future

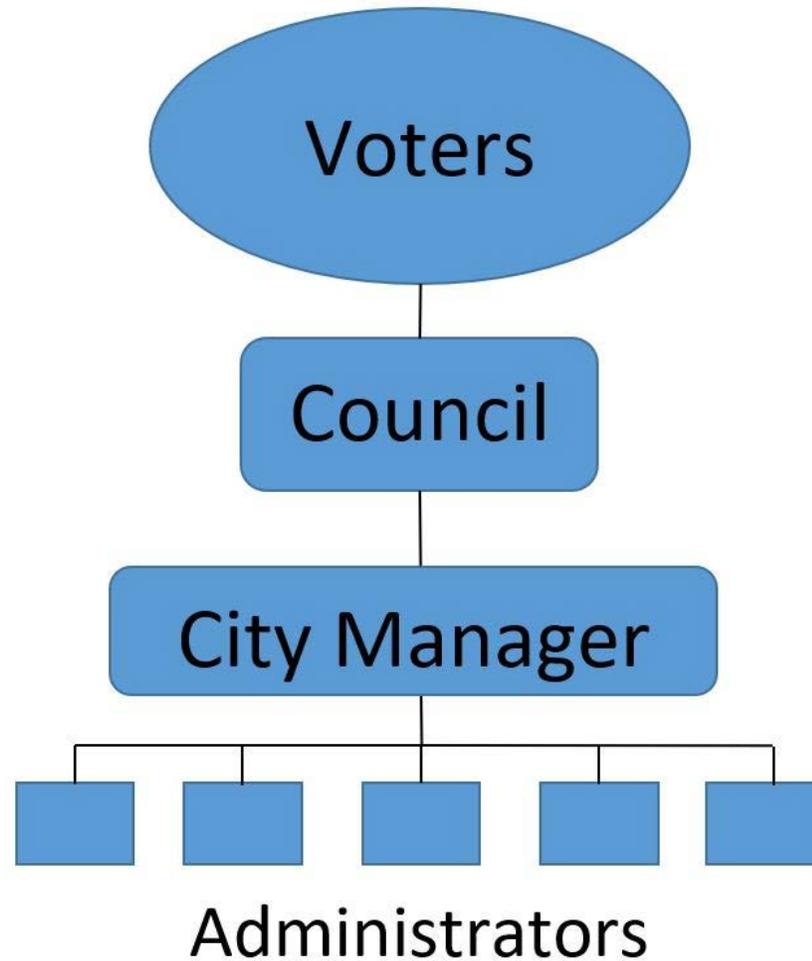


# Council-Manager Form of Government

- Elected council members (often elected at-large)
- Mayor (or council president) may be elected or selected by council from among its members
- Council appoints a chief executive, the city manager, who serves at its pleasure
- Council provides legislative direction
- The city manager oversees day-to-day operations, appoints administrators, and prepares a budget



# Council-Manager Form of Government



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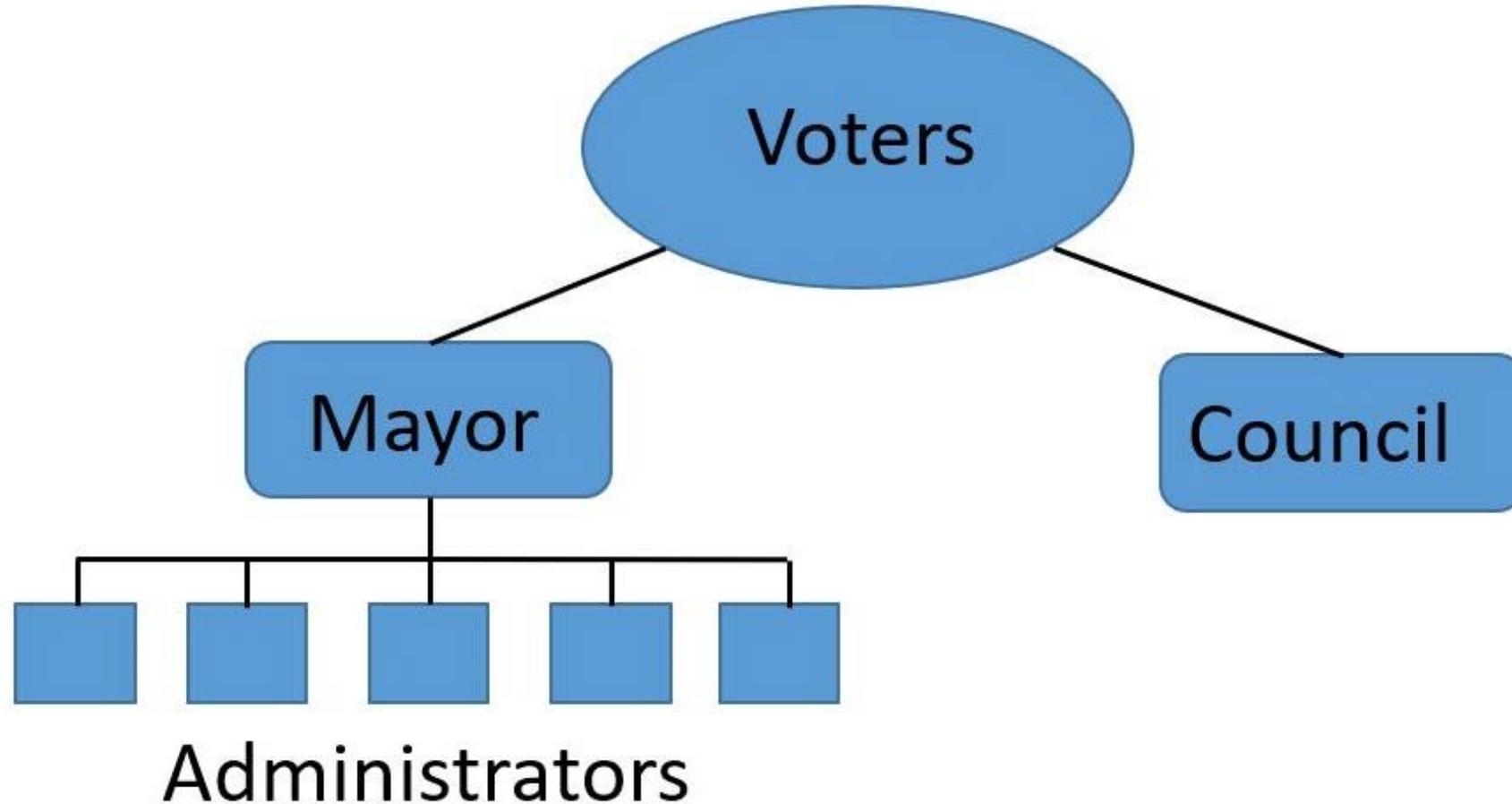


# Mayor-Council (Strong Mayor) Form of Government

- Elected chief executive
  - Strength of mayor depends upon explicit grant of authority, including day-to-day operations, veto power, appointment of department heads, and proposing a budget
- Elected legislature – city council
  - Elected from: wards or districts; at-large; or a combination of the two
  - Adopts budget, passes legislation, takes general policy positions



# Strong Mayor Form of Government



# Council-Manager Form of Government Strengths & Weaknesses

## Strengths

- Empowers council – the people’s representatives
- Chief executive is an educated professional
- Hiring of the city manager facilitates council identifying issues
- City manager is in, but not of, local politics
- Accountability of the city manager for how governing is conducted



# Council-Manager Form of Government Strengths & Weaknesses

## Weaknesses

- City manager is not elected
- Partisan politics can be difficult to address
- Depends upon the quality of council
- Can lack political leadership
- Citizens may lack understanding of the system



# Strong Mayor Form of Government

## Strengths & Weaknesses

### Strengths

- Elected chief executive can mobilize electoral support
- Campaigns can highlight issues publicly
- Mayor can form political coalitions
- Connections via party to other units and levels of government



# Strong Mayor Form of Government Strengths & Weaknesses

## Weaknesses

- Mayor can be popular but ineffective
- Mayoral candidates may not have managerial or administrative background
- Mayor can dominate the agenda
- Mayor can slight and sometimes ignore council
- Mayor may not deal with unpopular issues that could thwart political ambitions



## Features Can Be Added

- An elected ceremonial mayor can be part of a council-manager system
- A chief administrative officer can be appointed in a strong mayor system

*Caution: Any added feature must be carefully considered because it can negatively affect the system.*



# Other Considerations

## Council

- Elected at-large
- Elected from wards
- A combination of wards and at-large

## Council approval for some appointments and dismissals

- Law director
- Finance director



# Share and Listen

- Consider proposals in terms of having both good and not-so-good people serve in office
- Think about the logic of a system and the most important elements in it
  - In the council-manager system, a key part is an educated chief executive, often with experience in another city
  - In the strong mayor system, the chief executive is a successful electoral candidate with political skills



**Engage with your fellow citizens  
about how you would like your  
community to be governed!**

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# Group Exercises

**Katie Solender**

Member, Charter Review Commission

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**Introduce yourselves!**

**Choose a recorder/spokesperson**

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# Group Agreements

- Focus on the meeting purpose
- Be actively engaged
- Listen actively
- Stay committed to the process
- Strive to share new and relevant information with your group



## Question #1:

**What type of government do you prefer for Cleveland Heights, and why?**

- Council-Manager (current system)
- Strong Mayor
- Hybrid (some combination of both styles)
- Other
- And why?



**Report out!**

**What type of government do you  
prefer for Cleveland Heights,  
and why?**

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## Question #2:

**What other elements should be added to or changed in the city charter to improve our local government?**



# **Report out!**

**What other elements should be added to or changed in the city charter to improve our local government?**



# Next Steps & Closing Remarks

**John Newman Jr.**

Chair, Charter Review Commission

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# Get Involved!

- Attend commission meetings
- Review the charter with us!
- Share information with people you know
- Stay informed - Schedule, documents, and meeting video links are on the Charter Review Commission page of the city's website
- Contact us: email [lkeller@clvhts.com](mailto:lkeller@clvhts.com) or drop off written comments at City Hall, attention: Susanna O'Neil.

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**Thank you for coming!**

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