Community Meeting
Form of Government Discussion
April 19, 2018

Charter Review Commission
Welcome

John Newman Jr.
Chair, Charter Review Commission
Commission Members

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

Charter Review Commission
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
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
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
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:
  o What is the problem we are trying to solve?
  o How would a change affect issues of representation, policy, leadership, and administrative efficiency?
  o 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
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

Voters

Council

City Manager

Administrators

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Mayor-Council (Strong Mayor) Form of Government

• Elected chief executive
  o 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
  o Elected from: wards or districts; at-large; or a combination of the two
  o Adopts budget, passes legislation, takes general policy positions
Strong Mayor Form of Government

Voters

Mayor

Council

Administrators

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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
  o In the council-manager system, a key part is an educated chief executive, often with experience in another city
  o 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!
Group Exercises
Katie Solender
Member, Charter Review Commission
Introduce yourselves!

Choose a recorder/spokesperson
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?

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Report out!

What type of government do you prefer for Cleveland Heights, and why?
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
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 or drop off written comments at City Hall, attention: Susanna O'Neil.
Thank you for coming!