



City of Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission

Submissions to the Commission - Revised

Committee of the Whole
30 April 2018

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The following messages and other materials have been submitted to the Facilitator since the last sharing of Submissions. The materials are ordered by date received.

1. Garry Kanter – Message 15 April 2018

Mr. Keller,

It is long past the time for the Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission to clear itself of the time and energy wasting distractions of an Elected Mayor in Cleveland Heights.

I have read the questionnaire responses from the four city council members respectful enough to reply.

Each makes it clear that *the Commission was created to bring an end to the inappropriate and clandestine efforts of then "Mayor" Cheryl Stephens and some community members - including Commission member Carla Rautenberg and propagandist FutureHeights board member Bob Brown - to bring about an elected mayor in Cleveland Heights.*

*The Commission was *not* created to be the forum to debate and implement the secretive goals of some deceitful special interests.*

Brown's remarks at the February 1, 2018 commission meeting reveal that former CH city councilperson and current State Representative Janine Boyd was in on their "tainted" plan, as well.

No amount of commentary from ill-informed, non-citizen "Guest Experts" like John Zagara changes these facts.

I call on the Commission to end all discussions regarding an elected mayor, and invest their valuable time on the CH Charter (and related ordinances) as they currently exist.

Let Councilperson Stephens, State Rep Boyd, and their special interest group invest their own time on the issue of an elected mayor. Let *them* spend the time needed to write the countless detailed ordinances defining the separation of duties between a mayor and the city council. Let *them* explain where the \$500,000 annually for a fully staffed Mayor's Office is going to come from. Let *them* get their own petition signatures as required for their special interest ballot issue.

The Commission has plenty of important issues to deal with, without wasting any more time on this.

Mr. Keller, please share this e-mail with all Commission members and the appropriate elected city officials and employees.

I also ask that this e-mail becomes a "Submission" to the Commission's online work papers, as were Mr. Brown's special interest group's documents.

Sincerely,

Garry Kanter

2. Richard Hollis – Message 15 April 2018

I certainly agree with what Garry says. I do, however, feel that ward representation is an essential change.

Richard A. Hollis

3. Dan Margolis – Message 18 April 2018

Prof. Keller,

With the exception of college and law school, I am a lifelong resident of NE Ohio and a resident of Cleveland Heights since 1996 -- twenty-two years in this lovely city. I am passionate about this city, it's [sic] environs, and the people who make it so unique. I have always appreciated our government's structure, especially in light of the disfunction [sic] often seen in some of our neighbors. I appreciate that the executive is supervised by council. This provides us with a mayor who is responsive and unconcerned about winning elections. Further, having a city council untethered

to particular neighborhoods allows them to advocate for what is best for the city, not what is best for a discrete number of people within the city.

I find our city government to be responsive, concerned and effective. While no institution is perfect, I believe the current structure serves the city and her inhabitants very well. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best,

Dan Margolis
1857 Wilton Rd.
Cleveland Heights, OH 44118

Sincerely yours,

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4. Garry Kanter – Message 20 April 2018

A: It ain't us residents/voters.

They take orders from the county's monopoly political party.

Just as that so-called Elected Strong Mayor would be obligated to take orders from the Cuyahoga County Democratic Party.

But that wasn't mentioned at last night's meeting, was it? How convenient!

Let's end this waste of the CH Charter Review Commission's time, and get to the real issues of Transparency, Accountability, and Representation.

The FutureHeights/Reaching Heights gang is - as always - doing their best to make it look like the form of government change is inevitable and The Only True and Right Thing.

"The only way to find out is to put it on the ballot!" - Battle cry heard repeatedly at last night's Charter Review Commission meeting

No.

Not if the Commission doesn't think so.

And not if City Council doesn't think so.

And not just because The Usual Suspects are running their Usual Racket.

They are biased, special interest propagandists with an unspoken agenda, candidate, and means. And they are well represented on the Charter Review Commission.

Can you imagine if the city's decisions were in the sole hands of "Their" Elected Strong Mayor - that *they* got elected?

How'd that work out when they controlled the entire school board for eight years?

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3. I think many different forms of government can work if you have the right people and they are committed to making it work, so I don't see the need for a change.
An idea for improvement:
The City Council race and operations are supposed to be nonpartisan, but that is not the case! I am registered Republican. I see the chief benefit of being a registered member of a party is that you get to vote in the primaries, possibly selecting good candidates for "we the people" to vote on. I have been told my fellow councilmembers cannot vote for me to be the president/mayor of Cleveland Heights because they will be kicked off the Cuyahoga County Democrat Executive Committee if they do (I may not have the name of the Dems group exactly right, but you get the idea). My fellow City Councilmembers are all members of that august group, or aspire to be. Mayor Welo of S. Euclid was kicked off after she endorsed a Republican. So attached is legislation from Davis, California, specifying how their mayor is selected. If we had something similar, it would make the position of mayor quasi-elected, and it would remove the politics and make the selection nonpartisan, just like the election is supposed to be. It would also make the mayor's job a rotating position. Since we on Council are all equals, this makes sense to me. Please consider the attachment. CH supposedly likes diversity - just not political diversity. The proposed form of mayoral selection is consistent with our aspirations to embrace diversity. This modification of how the mayor is selected would be a big improvement, in my view.

Thanks for considering.

Best,

Mary Dunbar

<http://www.clevelandheights.com/documentcenter/view/1593>

5. Garry Kanter – Message 25 April 2018

To Whom It May Concern,

FutureHeights Board Member Robert Brown has written in The Heights Observer on at least seven occasions regarding the Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission.

* Board Member Brown has reported on his own public comments at Commission meetings without identifying the remarks as his own.

* Board Member Brown is a member of the group that met with then-Mayor Cheryl Stephens and former city councilperson Janine Boyd advocating for changing the city's form of government.

* At the February 1, 2018 Commission meeting, in Board Member Brown's public comments, he described those meetings as having "Tainted that group" and "Our group was honestly sincerely motivated. It was tainted...".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BGaAkXYj45o&feature=youtu.be>

* Board Member Brown did not include this important news in his February 6, 2018 Heights Observer report on that Commission meeting.

* <http://www.heightsobserver.org/read/2018/02/06/ch-council-members-see-no-need-to-change-form-of>

* As described by at least four city council members - in their submissions to the Charter Review Commission - it was this group and their "Tainted" meetings with then-Mayor Stephens and former councilperson Boyd which directly led to the creation of the Charter Review Commission.

* Board Member Brown's "reporting" can hardly be described as "Fair and Balanced".

It is readily apparent that Board Member Brown is not properly disclosing his "Interest - financial or otherwise" in the Commission's work - and specifically the change of government question that he champions - in his author bio.

Such disclosure is identified as a "Really Important" requirement in the "How To Contribute" page of The Heights Observer (Bolding in the original):

"Really Important: It is the nature of a community project like this that many contributors have a direct interest in the topics they cover. If you are writing about an event or organization in which you have a direct interest—financial or otherwise—you must disclose that connection in the author bio box at the end of the article."

[Inline image]<http://www.heightsobserver.org/read/how-to-contribute/>

Accordingly, I request that Board Member Brown's author bio (for past and future submissions) regarding the Charter Review Commission be corrected to reflect his direct interest and advocacy for a change to our city's government.

I also request that The Heights Observer's editor publish an explanation for why this FutureHeights Board Member's failure to disclose a direct interest was allowed, and what steps will be taken to insure it is not repeated.

As you know, I have - correctly - brought this same issue to your attention several times in the past regarding various contributors.

Sincerely,

Garry Kanter

6. Garry Kanter – Message 25 April 2018

Thank you for replying, Dr. Keller.

Including the information in your Submissions is all that I would expect. That e-mail was written to FutureHeights, hoping for corrective action by them.

I read Resolution No. 43-2017 (AS) passed by city council creating the Commission (there's always one, isn't there?), and it includes this:

"In the event said Commission considers significant changes to the Charter, the Commission is hereby charged to consider the following issues, if relevant:

1. What is the problem the Commission is trying to solve by considering a change to the Cleveland Heights' current form of government?
2. How will a change in the form of government affect the balance the Commission seeks on issues of representation, policy leadership, and administrative efficiency?
3. What are the consequences of changing the governance of Cleveland Heights?"

<http://www.clevelandheights.com/DocumentCenter/View/1242>

Has the Commission formally considered those issues, as charged? Because I didn't hear or see a Statement of the Problem last Thursday night, just a bunch of griping and so-called "solutions".

Is changing the form of government somehow going to fix the city's two biggest problems - high property taxes and under-performing schools?

No. Both of those are school district matters.

Absent such consideration as put forth in the Resolution, I find Thursday night's and the online surveys "out of sequence" as problem solving tools.

This survey seems to take the analysis and decision-making out of the Commission's (and council's) hands ("Let the voters decide!!!").

Frankly, the idea of any tabulation of responses - "Voting" - distresses me, even more so the statistically invalid method being employed.

The surveys also distress me from what I know of the special interests - FutureHeights/Reaching Heights/The Heights Observer/ballot issue campaign committees - that run Cleveland Heights. They are very well funded, focused, and coordinated. They have repeatedly demonstrated their ability to Organize the troops to give the impression of a community-wide consensus where none exists. I have responses to Public Records Requests, and their own public statements to support this observation.

I appreciate your contributions to the community, Dr. Keller.

Sincerely,

Garry Kanter