



# City of Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission

## Decisions and Rationales

Special Session  
5:30 PM 19 April 2018  
Conference Room  
Cleveland Heights Community Center

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

1. Marc Ott, Executive Director, International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

The Charter Review Commission meeting as a Committee of the Whole had a special one-hour session with the Executive Director of ICMA. The Executive Director, Marc Ott, was in Cleveland for another meeting and graciously agreed to meet with the Committee.

He shared his background, starting with an interest in law but ultimately engaging in local government service. Before taking the ICMA post in 2016, he served in a variety of cities and administrative positions, including both strong mayor and (predominantly) council-manager systems, most recently spending nearly nine years as city manager of Austin Texas. He explained why he did not run for an elective office and opted for city management, specifically acknowledging his own personal belief in and commitment to the professional management form of government.

He overviewed the purpose and functions of ICMA, emphasizing its role as assisting and promoting equitable policies and governing under a strong Code of Ethics, which was adopted in 1924 and updated over time. He personally, and city managers professionally, are devoted to governing by the Code. He shared his views on the roles of a city manager and how he/she participates in governance of a community, including the “art” associated with governing, leadership elements and circumstances, and the significance (or not) of titles such as CEO and CAO. He noted the accountability of a city manager to the council and mayor if the community has an office of mayor. The council is

formally responsible for policy formulation but the city manager helps in that regard. The city manager has primary responsibility for administration but plays public roles as well, the exact role or roles being dependent upon the council and the circumstances. He believes a city manager can be a leader and articulate a community vision, although all public officials, business and other institutional interests, community participants, and citizens in general should be involved. He noted there are certain metrics on government performance as between the principal different forms, provides some examples and noted that data on the subject can be obtained from ICMA.

He acknowledged that having an office of mayor in a council-manager system, even if ceremonial, can be problematic, although it need not be. How the office works depends upon how the person holding the office sees and performs the duties. The city manager remains accountable to the council not just to the mayor. He commented on whether a city's having a council-manager form amongst a collection of cities with strong mayoral systems might or might not raise issues for the with a council-manager form, and also on whether he has observed any correlation between size or other city characteristics on the one hand and suitability of particular forms of government on the other.

He commented on what he has experienced and observed with both at-large and district-based council election systems.

He noted that most changes in forms of government in recent times have been in the direction of adopting some form of the council-manager plan and gave his view as to why this is so.

For Mr. Ott, a successful city is defined by a variety of metrics addressing the quality of life, such as a good place to raise a family, having a variety of amenities, etc.

Mr. Ott's biography/resume can be found at:  
<https://icma.org/icma-executive-director>

## 2. Meeting adjourned

Committee adjourned in favor of the Community Meeting in the Main Room of the Community Center scheduled to start at 7:00 PM.