



City of Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission

Questions for Members of Council, City Manager, Department Directors and Chairs of Boards and Commissions

The Commission has been specifically directed by City Council to look at some critical parts of the City Charter, such as the form of government. However, as part of that effort, the Commission wants to be sure to deal with any provision that needs attention. To help ascertain views of the form of government as well as what provisions need attention, the Commission is sending out this brief survey. The questions are open ended, so you can fully express your views. You may also suggest specific changes to any provision.

In addition, the Commission may invite some respondents to attend a meeting of the Commission to further explain their views.

If you have any questions on the survey, you can contact Dr. Larry Keller, Commission Facilitator, at 216-496-4184. Please return completed surveys either by E-Mail to Dr. Larry Keller at lkeller@clvhts.com, or by envelope to Susanna O'Neil, Assistant City Manager, snoneil@clvhts.com. If desired, department heads and chairs of boards and commissions can return surveys without any identity.

Please return completed surveys by Monday, 15 January.

1. What parts of the Charter should be considered by the Commission, without necessarily implying that you believe a change should or should not be made.

The three (3) most important elements for consideration, not necessarily in order of importance to you.

Any remaining elements, preferably in order of importance to you.

- A. Article III The Council, Section III-1 Powers, Number and Term.
- B. Article IV City Manager
- C. Article IV City Manager, Section IV-1 Appointment

2. For each part identified in Question 1, explain briefly,

- (a) why the item should be considered and if you think a change may be warranted, then
- (b) what the change should be and why.

A. Section III-1 pertains to the number of members elected on City Council and the fact that they are elected at large. The City of Cleveland Heights is a good size city, with a diverse population. It may be beneficial to consider the possibility of electing members of Councils based on wards or a combination of members from wards and at-large. The interests of the various neighborhoods throughout the City may differ from one another and therefore each neighborhood or part of the City may not have adequate representation on Council. Having a member of Council who actually lives in your area could benefit the residents of that area. Residents would be aware of who on Council represents their ward and can then contact him/her directly rather than approaching all members of Council about concerns in their ward. This would allow for diverse opinions from all areas of the City to be considered and there would be greater accountability to the residents of each ward.

B. Currently the City of Cleveland Heights has a City Manager form of government. This has worked well for the City over the years and has many advantages to it. The intent of having a City Manager was to fight corruption and unethical behavior. While the Council continues to have authority to make laws, it is the responsibility of the City to ensure that they are carried out. This basically takes the politics out of the mix for the City Manager. Furthermore, if the City Manager is not fulfilling his/her responsibilities, then Council can terminate the City Manager. In the alternative, having a Mayor form of government, in which the Mayor is elected, it may be more difficult to remove the Mayor until after an election. Lastly, while the City Manager reports to Council, he/she is professionally bound to report all information to Council in a professional and unbiased manner.

C. Under the current Charter, the City Manager a majority of the members of City Council is required for his/her appointment, suspension or removal. It would be better served if five votes are needed for the appointment, suspension or removal of the person serving in this position. Only needing a majority vote, which could ultimately result in a four to three margin, is not sufficient enough of a margin. Since there are seven members on City Council, a vote of five members would provide for the true majority to represent the intent of City Council.

3. Identify any change or changes you have observed in the facts and circumstances of the city (other than personnel changes in the City Council or City Administration) in the five (5) years since the on-cycle determination by Council in 2012 that no charter review was warranted. Note the changes that warrant this off-cycle review, and how any such changes relate to what you noted in Questions 1 and 2 above.

N/A

4. What parts of the current structure of the City government are: (a) serving the City well; (b) not serving the City well?

A. Having a City Government that is led by a City Manager appointed by Council is serving the City well. The City Manager is not a political figure that is an elected official and therefore is less-likely to be influenced by the politics that may occur with an elected official. In addition, the City Manager is required to be more transparent and unbiased, as he or she is accountable to City Council.

B. Currently the Charter calls for Council Members that are at-large. In essence, they can be from anywhere in the City. This leaves the possibility that Council members could be elected from only certain sections of the City, while others could be underrepresented. By establishing wards or districts, it would help to ensure that all sections of the City are represented and have a Council member who is familiar with their neighborhood and the interests and concerns associated with it.