



City of Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission

Submissions to the Commission

Committee of the Whole
13 August 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. Bob Brown – 2 August 2018

TO: Cleveland Heights Charter Review Commission Members

I am writing to add a comment on the issue you discussed at the July 19th meeting regarding the possibility of head-to-head council elections. Many of us believe that it is best that the composition of Council generally reflects the demographic composition of the community. With respect to the demographics of Cleveland Heights, the most sensitive diversity issues seem to relate to the African-American community and the Orthodox Jewish community.

I think that citywide head-to-head Council elections reduce the likelihood that these “minority” candidates will be elected.

For better or worse, many people tend to vote for candidates from their own racial or religious group. When less than half the people who vote in an election are part of a particular racial or religious group, a head-to-head election between a member of one of these “minority groups” and a candidate who is a member of the “majority group” would likely result in a loss by the minority group candidate.

In contrast, under the current system, where three or four Council seats are on the same ballot, it is more likely that a candidate from a minority group (racial or religious) will be elected, given that voters from the same group tend to give priority to electing that candidate.

Therefore, in the interest of promoting demographic diversity on Council, it seems best to keep the current election protocols, rather than switching to head-to-head elections.

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2. Bob Brown – Message 6 August 2018

Larry (and colleagues): Attached is another note I'd like shared with the Charter Review Commission. Thanks.

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Appendix 1

Written Message from Bob Brown

LEAVING WITHOUT SAYING GOODBYE

As one of the most frequent attendees at the Charter Review Commission meetings, I'm guessing that my absence from the last few meetings was noticed. Since it is not polite to leave without saying goodbye, I am writing to let you know why I stopped attending.

First, I want you to know that I continue to watch the full meetings on the City's website, as are others who were attending earlier meetings in person. I have seen that the Commission continues to work hard in addressing the need for amendments to the Cleveland Heights Charter. I recognize the importance of your continued work.

As someone who worked in local government for nearly forty years, I spent a lot of time addressing fairly tedious bureaucratic matters – so I sympathize with you in some of the more mundane aspects of your current work. I give you credit for taking your civic responsibility so seriously.

Although I remain interested in your work, it was the opportunity for a popularly elected mayor in Cleveland Heights that caused me to go the extra mile, attending all the meetings and writing articles for the Heights Observer.

When you decided not to recommend changes in the basic governance structure of Cleveland Heights, I decided to cut back on my participation. With respect to coverage in the Heights Observer, I don't know that the subject matter of your current work necessitates publication of frequent newspaper articles.

I hope to write a Heights Observer article to cover your final recommendations on changes to the Charter, unless a member or staff to the Commission chooses to write that article. And I hope to be a supporter to advocate for action on the Charter amendments that you propose.

Finally, it is likely that I will participate in a petition initiative to amend the Charter to address the mayoral issue, if such an initiative takes place.

I wish you the best in the completion of your important work on the City Charter.