

## Charter Review Commission

### Report of a Meeting of the Legislative and Oversight Committee

**Date; Time of Meeting:** February 27, 2024; 6:00 pm

**Chair:** Julianne Montes de Oca

**People Present:**

Committee Members: Juliane Montes de Oca, Emily Levy, Kathy Christian, Matt Stegman, Dr. Roger Hartley,

Commission Members: None

Staff: Aaron Degraffenreidt, Hilary Ruley

Members of the Public:

**Purpose:** Review of Article X, Office of the Inspector General and Article XI, Charter Review Commission. Review of Pending Proposals.

**Discussion:**

- The Committee reviewed Article X, Office of the Inspector General. The discussion covered how this Article is more recently written, and therefore in a more updated style. Committee members asked staff questions regarding the general IG process, investigation topics, and the process after a report has been issued. No proposals were recommended on this Article.
- The Committee then reviewed Article XI, Charter Review Commission. Committee members questioned whether having May 1 as the date by which the Commission constituted is realistic or if it would be helpful to set an earlier date. Committee Member Stegman offered insight on the history of the article, the timing of when it was written, the purpose, and the delays of Covid. A question was asked on whether the article gives enough instruction to the Commission and discussion on that point considered that too much instruction would hamstring some iterations of the Commission and therefore, that the article is better left vague. No proposals were recommended on this Article.
- Discussion turned to the pending proposals that had previously been introduced to the Committee. Hilary provided an update on a write-on petition being certified for inclusion on the ballot. The write on petition would change the number of districts to 8 and would include a process for redistricting if the number of council districts was changed in the future. Hilary also explained the outcome if two conflicting redistricting measures were on the ballot, and both passed.

- Committee Member Hartley reviewed the rationale behind his proposal to have the council president elected by the City Council rather than in a city-wide vote. Mr. Hartley’s rationale included a look at the strong mayor system and the difficulty individual districts can have in advancing initiatives. Adding a city-wide elected Council president adds another layer of difficult for individual districts to put forward initiatives since the matter has to make it past the Council President before it even gets to the Mayor. The overall thought is to restore balance to the council and to give a stronger voice to the citizens. Mr. Hartley recognized the arguments against this proposal and the validity of those concerns. Other Committee members asked questions about the day-to-day logistical changes that would be required by this proposal. Discussion also covered how the rules governing how the council function are not found in the charter but rather in the council rules that the council passes at the start of each session. Additionally, it was pointed out how the Council President must be ready to step in for the Mayor and therefore by being elected by the city as a whole, has a city-wide view already.
- At the end of the discussion, Committee Member Montes de Oca committed to circulating the drafts of all the pending proposals so that Committee members can review them in detail and compare the conflicting redistricting proposals before the next Committee Meeting. Ms. Montes de Oca will also reach out to Commissioners Ellis, Willis, and Lee individually to invite them to the March 5 meeting to discuss their proposals.

**Next Steps:** Discussion of pending proposals and any new proposals:

1. Redistricting Proposals
  - a. Council Bill 24-0473 (Council President’s Bill)
  - b. Council Bill 24-0492 (Councilman Cohen’s Ordinance)
  - c. Council Bill 24-0487 (Councilman Costello’s Bill)
  - d. Commissioner Willis/Lee proposal
  - e. Write-on Petition
2. Ellis Proposal regarding the right to petition laws for referenda before they become effective
3. Hartley Proposal regarding election of Council President
4. New Proposals.

Next Meeting: March 5, 6:00pm Virtual