



CITY OF COCONUT CREEK CHARTER REVIEW BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Jeffrey Barker, Chairperson
Heidi Thorman, Vice Chairperson
Ann Fantell
Connie Finley
Steven Hall

Government Center
4800 West Copans Road
Coconut Creek, FL 33063

Date: February 18, 2020
Time: 4:30 PM
Location: Public Meeting Room

1. CALL TO ORDER

The fifth meeting of the 2020 Charter Review Board (CRB) was called to order by Vice Chair Heidi Thorman at 4:38 PM

2. ROLL CALL

Chair Jeffrey Barker – District C (Arrived at 4:45 PM)
Vice Chair Heidi Thorman – District A
Ann Fantell - District B
Steven Hall – District E
Connie Finley – District D

ALSO PRESENT: City Attorney Terrill Pyburn, Deputy City Attorney Kathryn Mehaffey, and City Clerk Leslie Wallace May.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve the minutes of the February 10, 2020, Charter Review Board Meeting was made by Mr. Hall and seconded by Ms. Fantell. The motion was approved 4-0.

4. CONFIRM NEXT MEETING DATE OF 2/24/2020 AT 5 PM

Ms. Fantell announced that she accepted a job offer, which begins on February 26, 2020. She asked for the Board's consensus with changing the meeting start time to 6 PM beginning with the meeting scheduled for March 2. It was confirmed that the February 24 meeting would still begin at 5 PM but from March 2 forward, the meetings would begin at 6 PM.

City Attorney Pyburn summarized that Vice Mayor Lou Sarbone would be presenting at the February 24 meeting and that, pending confirmation of the time change, Assistant Finance Director Peta-Gay Lake would be presenting at the March 2 meeting.

Discussion ensued regarding the deadline to have the final report completed and it was confirmed that April 27 is the deadline to have the ordinance completed for the May 14 City Commission

agenda. City Clerk May explained that the final report would need to be completed and signed by the Board before April 27.

5. DISCUSSION BY COMMISSIONER BELVEDERE (Time Certain 4:45 PM)

Commissioner Belvedere joined the meeting at 4:45 PM, and greeted each of the Board members. She made the following recommendations for Charter changes:

Term Limits

Commissioner Belvedere noted the importance of learning from tenured Commissioners. She suggested that if the Board was considering setting Term Limits, that the limit be no less than 12 years.

November Elections (Charter Section 706)

Commissioner Belvedere expressed her concerns with moving to November elections due to the City's items getting lost on the larger sized ballot.

Charter Section 602 – Commission Action on Budget and Five-Year Capital Program

Commissioner Belvedere suggested the following:

- Adding the word "Improvement" to the Title and in Paragraph "a." so it reads as, "Capital Improvement Program," which makes it consistent with the language in the City's budget.
- Removing subparagraphs "b.1." and "b.2." regarding Notice and Hearing and replacing it with, "Notice shall be provided in accordance with state law."

Charter Section 707 – Calling an Election by Resolution

Commissioner Belvedere suggested removing the entire section and replacing it with, "Notice shall be provided in accordance with state law."

Discussion ensued regarding the resolution being an extra step in the process and why the language might have been included in the Charter and whether any of the section was necessary. Discussion concluded with the decision to remove the entire section subject to legal verification that it was not necessary.

Charter Section 708 – Elections; How Arranged For; Inspectors and Clerks

Commissioner Belvedere suggested the following:

- Changing the title so it reads as, "Elections; How Arranged For; ~~Inspectors and Clerks~~ Notice."
- Striking most of the language so it reads as, "The City Clerk shall make all necessary arrangements for the holding of all City elections. The City Clerk shall employ or contract with the Broward County Supervisor of Elections for administrative services to conduct a municipal election within the City. The City Clerk shall provide Notice in accordance with state law."

Discussion ensued regarding the fact that the Broward County Supervisor of Elections, not the City, controls the staffing numbers at polling places. It was noted that consistent with other changes the Notice of Election information should be revised to provide for notice in accordance with state law.

Charter Section 803 – Petitions

Commissioner Belvedere suggested removing the word “municipal” from paragraph “a.” so that it reads as follows:

“a. *Number of signatures.* Initiative and referendum petitions must be signed by a minimum of five (5) percent of the total number of registered electors as of the preceding ~~municipal~~ election.”

Commissioner Belvedere explained that this change allows the City to use the immediately preceding election, without limiting us to the previous municipal election that might have data that is two years old.

Chair Barker explained that the Board had previously discussed the topic of moving elections to November and the concerns with the City’s election getting lost on the larger sized ballots. He mentioned that the Board had discussed looking into moving the elections from March of odd-numbered years to March of even-numbered years to save money by coinciding with the presidential preference primary election. It was noted that there could be approximately a \$44,000 cost savings every other election cycle. Commissioner Belvedere agreed with saving money, but was concerned with the logistics as far as extending the length of the current terms.

Ms. Fantell asked Commissioner Belvedere for her opinion on removing the one-year cap from the term of the Mayor and allowing it to be a two-year term. Commissioner Belvedere did not agree.

Mr. Hall mentioned that proposed recommendation of having an elected Mayor who would be the front person for attracting new businesses into the City in addition to having four commission seats that would either be voted by district or at large. Commissioner Belvedere noted her reasons for keeping the City Commission as is and leaving the business development to professional staff members.

6. DISCUSSION BY THE BOARD

Chair Barker asked Staff to verify that the suggested changes were okay to remove from the Charter. He questioned the reasoning for the language in Charter Section 707 being needed or not needed for the Commission to call an election by resolution. Deputy City Attorney Mehaffey confirmed that all changes would be verified. Mr. Hall asked Staff to provide copies of the state statutes relating to elections. City Attorney Pyburn noted that Charter Section 707 most likely could be removed in its entirety rather than making it reference state law. Discussion ensued about a referendum question that cleans-up all of the Election sections.

Ms. Finley asked if the “Running Issue List” previously distributed would be updated. Deputy City Attorney Mehaffey explained that the list had not been updated to include the suggestions from the last meeting proposed by Commissioner Rydell to allow the opportunity for Ms. Finley and Vice Chair Thorman to discuss those suggested changes. She noted that the Running List would be updated to include Commissioner Rydell’s and Commissioner Belvedere’s suggestions.

Discussion ensued regarding the wording of the referendum questions and that the issues would be grouped by subject within the questions. City Attorney Pyburn explained that it will ultimately depend upon what the Board decides as being most important to put before the electors and how those subjects can be grouped together into questions.


Mr. Hall inquired about the process, once the final report is done, for informing the residents about the referendums. City Attorney Pyburn explained that the City Commission cannot advocate one way or the other, they can only educate. Mr. Hall asked if a Commissioner can hold a meeting in his/her area to educate the residents and City Attorney Pyburn confirmed that could be done. Mr. Hall expressed his concerns regarding the residents not knowing the background of the issues since the questions would be condensed. Chair Barker agreed that sometimes a voter can read the question, but not understand the process. Discussion ensued over concerns that no one from the public was attending the meetings to hear why the changes were being made. City Attorney Pyburn emphasized the importance of the Board and noted their ability to impact the voters and the community because they were essentially amending the constitution of the City. She explained that regardless of whether or not anyone attends the meetings, the Board should make the changes that they think are necessary. She noted that as part of the Board's recommendations to the Commission, that perhaps they could ask the Commission be available to help educate the public on the changes. Ms. Finley noted that the Community Outreach Board was trying to find creative ways to get the residents to use the City's website and that maybe they could educate the residents to listen to the CRB meetings that are published online. Mr. Hall noted how easy it is to access the audio of any of the meetings especially since the agenda items are time stamped.

Mr. Barker quickly summarized the items brought forward by Commissioner Rydell at the last meeting and asked if there were any questions from the Board. There were no further questions.

7. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:41 PM.

Transcribed by: Leslie Wallace May



Leslie Wallace May
Leslie Wallace May, MMC, City Clerk

2/24/2020

Date