

Charter Review Committee Minutes – August 17, 2017

Charter Review Committee Board

Members Present	Staff	Visitors
Ellis Conner	Growth Management Director	Rick Girardin
Adrienne McKinnie	Planning Coordinator	Stephen Storm
Andrew Rencich		Ken Neilson
Warren Robinson		Dr. David Goetsch
Michelle Simmons	Members Absent	
Joshua Molyneux	Gene Strickland	
<p>The data reflected within these proceedings constitute an extrapolation of information elicited from notes, observations, recording tapes and photographs. Comments reflected herein are sometimes paraphrased, condensed and have been edited to reflect essential subject matter covered during the meeting. Parties interested in receiving a verbatim account of the proceedings are responsible for coordinating with the City Clerk's office and providing their own representative and equipment to produce a verbatim account of the proceedings pursuant to Crestview Policy 91 1, Duplication of Public Records, Chapters 119 and 283, Florida Statutes and Attorney General opinions in force at time of enactment of Policy 91 1.</p>		

CONVENE - The Charter Review Committee meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday, August 17, 2017, in the City Hall Council Chambers, by Mr. Conner.

Mr. Conner introduced guest speaker Dr. David Goetsch.

Dr. Goetsch presented his views on the Mayor/City Manager form of government. Pros and cons he will present are from strictly an economic development perspective. He cautioned that this is not the only perspective and that this form of government discussion is similar to the game plan for a football team: it matters who is on the team. This discussion can be boiled down to an argument between democracy / Mayor / public right to know versus efficiency / City Manager / privacy and used an example of Disney purchasing land and the need for privacy with purchasing those parcels. He then discussed the Economic Development Council responsibility to create jobs; location consultants and their responsibilities and how they find locations for the businesses they represent; businesses and economic developers do not like City Council form of government and prefer the City Manager form. The City Council and Mayoral forms of government have 'nimby' view (not in my back yard) and they view the City Manager's job is to administer rules and regulations and not enforce personal opinions or agendas. There is a universal feeling among Economic Developers that the City Manager form of government is preferred, some previous potential businesses have passed Crestview by based on the form of their government.

Mr. Conner asked about the prior attempt to change the Charter and using the term Administrator versus Manager.

Dr. Goetsch replied that the Manager has a stronger feel to Economic Development professionals. A City Manager puts forward the idea that they are someone that can make decisions.

Mr. Rencich questioned what checks and balances could be placed on a City Manager that would not tie his hands.

Dr. Goetsch suggested to make sure the elected Council has a Chairperson and that the person has a day to day connection with the City Manager, then write the Charter in such a way to spell out what decisions can be made without going to the City Council. A City Manager works at the direction of the Council and they must follow their direction. A City Council / Mayor form can create gridlock in decisions because the Mayor cannot be fired.

Mr. Conner asked Dr. Goetsch if he would be available when they begin writing the Charter and he replied that he would be happy to assist.

Mr. Molyneux asked about the attrition rate for City Managers.

Dr. Goetsch replied that the average time is 3 years in the state of Florida and that has a lot to do with the City Council and newly elected members. There are mixed opinions on merits and he has seen cases when the City Manager had stayed on so long that the City Manager had amassed a lot of power within the City.

Mr. Rencich asked about work and background requirements for the applicant.

Dr. Goetsch replied to look for experience over degrees, someone from Florida so they know State laws; someone with a track history and record; lean on the Professional Association for assistance, a track record is more important and valuable than any degree.

Mr. Rencich replied that he understood that a higher degree would require a higher salary.

Dr. Goetsch replied that he was not an advocate of someone right out of school and he preferred someone out of school 2-3 years with some assistant experience as a good candidate. Brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Conner called for a recess at 6:29. The Board relocated to the roundtable for discussion.

Mr. Conner called meeting back to order at 6:36 and apologized to Mr. Robinson for the lack of response to his question at the last meeting and he discussed how public meetings and budget workshops are regulated by State law.

Ms. Gaillard stated that the next budget workshop will be @ 4:30 on the 28th and the City Council workshop begins at 6:00.

Mr. Conner moved the discussion to Chapter 7, since that is where they left off at the last meeting. Discussion was had to reduce the Charter prior to going to the voters and the City Council can adopt ordinances that it is written. He suggested Article 7 be adopted as an ordinance not under the Charter and set a time frame for review of Article 7 to be included in the ordinance, if they wish to adopt the suggestion of the Charter Review Committee. The next City Council may want to conduct a review sooner than four years.

Mr. Rencich agreed, he sees the value in what Mr. Conner stated.

Mr. Conner stated that he wanted to reduce the amount the voters would have to read and understand.

Mr. Rencich questioned how the last ordinance was put before voters.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Molyneux stated that Fort Walton Beach Charter does not have a Charter review section in their Charter and it is only 7 pages; one of the best to understand.

Mr. Conner stated he would like to be on a committee that gets a Charter passed that is simple and less to read is best.

Ms. Gaillard asked if the information could be in sections or an administrative article after the Charter.

Mr. Conner stated that would be an attorney question.

Mr. Rencich asked for board consensus to ask Ms. Teresa to follow up with the attorney on that question.

Mr. Conner moved the discussion to Article 8 and suggested the same approach as Article 7.

Mr. Molyneux stated Fort Walton Beach does not have an ethics section.

Mr. Conner asked for board consensus for Ms. Gaillard to go to the attorney with both questions for Article 7 & 8.

Mr. Conner moved to a discussion of the Mayor and the City Council, specifically the duties of the Mayor and asked for additional thoughts to root out wrongdoing within the City. He suggested adding additional verbiage for checks and balances and suggested a question and answer session with former Mayor Milligan and Mayor Cadle.

Mr. Molyneux stated that the Mayor has an Inspector General function as a counter balance and suggested to keep that function.

Mr. Robinson asked what the City Manager can do for the City that isn't already being done and he is concerned with the turnover like has transpired with the Police Department.

Mr. Rencich stated that is expected and is part of what has been discussed with the 3-year turnover and he felt the professionalism of the position and structure would provide for a draw to commercial enterprise and bring commercial taxes.

Mr. Robinson stated he had not seen the improvements and benefits to the citizens in Destin.

Much discussion ensued pertaining to traffic issues and traffic passing through town.

Mr. Robinson stated he moved to Crestview for cheap land and the community, not for businesses and he would prefer businesses to go elsewhere, he doesn't care about businesses being here.

Mr. Conner stated that Crestview is going to grow and you cannot stop the growth, so plan accordingly and manage that.

Discussion moved to how the City grows through expansion of water and sewer services.

Mr. Molyneux discussed how the City Manager operates as a single point of contact for the businesses that come in and explained how the City works and operates.

Mr. Robinson stated that the City Manager cannot override existing ordinances.

Discussion ensued.

Ms. Gaillard discussed the financial benefits of a City Manager and how the review of the proper assessment for properties through tax rolls could be one of the tasks for the City Manager.

Mr. Molyneux commented that all businesses, military bases need a leader or CEO and suggested that all department heads would likely agree with a City Manager.

Ms. Simmons read the mission statement of the Charter Review Committee.

Mr. Conner then stated that the committee is moving forward on the consensus that a change is needed from the current form of government.

Ms. Simmons stated that the comments from Mr. Robinson were ideas and comments that the public have to deal with on a daily basis.

Mr. Conner moved the discussion to a request to invite Mayor Cadle and Mr. Milligan to the next meeting, to discuss strengthening oversight. He would also like to hear from all department heads and for them to provide a brief presentation for and against a City Manager.

Mr. Rencich stated he would like to hear both the pros and cons. Board members agreed. He then stated that reading through the Ft. Walton Beach City Charter and hearing Dr. Goetsch speak, he would like to know the other board members' thoughts on the City Council being able to overturn and tie the hands of the City Manager.

Board members stated that it goes back to the discussion of having a Human Resource Department for check and balance.

Mr. Conner suggested the next meeting be the City Attorney and Mr. Graham Fountain.

Ms. Gaillard stated that there is a meeting on the 31st and on the 7th. September 11th is the deadline unless an extension is asked for.

Mr. Rencich asked for them to be at the next meeting.

Mr. Conner concurred once the department heads spoke to the board.

Discussion moved to Ms. Gaillard preparing a document based on current consensus of the board.

Mr. Conner then discussed previous statements about the district map and the history of the district map and stipulations placed on the City.

Mr. Rencich asked if the precinct review could be an ordinance.

Ms. Gaillard suggested asking the attorney.

Mr. Conner asked if there was anything from the audience.

Ken Neilson stated the online comments were that the committee was getting off track.

Mr. Storm commented on keeping it simple.

Mr. Conner called for a motion to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 7:22 P.M.


Secretary


Chairman/Vice Chairman