

BLUE RIBBON ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, June 27, 2018
5:30 P.M.

Committee Members Present: Drozdowski, Schwarz, Hanner, Champlin, McIlroy, Antaya, Helmboldt, Burlison (departed 6:07 pm), Burton, Whitfield, Tomak (departed 6:07 pm), Johnson, Moreno, Squires, Godfrey and Fukuyama (arrived 5:37 pm)

Committee Members Absent : Weaver and Settles

Others Present: Jill Steele, City Attorney: Rebecca Fleury, City Manager: Victoria Houser, City Clerk

Call to Order: Dr. Schwarz called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Public Comment: John Harper, Ward 3 resident, commented on the city charter adopted in 1963, amendments considered when city circumstance deemed, once when merged city and township, not just due to popular opinion. Mr. Harper duty to change the circumstances that compel a change to the ordinance. Be responsible, use expertise and wisdom.

Approval of Minutes: Mr. Godfrey, supported by Ms. Antaya, made a motion to approve the May 16, 2018 meeting minutes, as amended. All yes, none opposed. Motion approved.

Prior Meeting Business

Direct election of mayor and vice mayor, number of elected officials, term of officials, staggered terms, size of the commission, all wards or all at-large, combination, gender neutral language.

Mr. Godfrey asked the City Manager if the committee report was accepted with comment or not.

Ms. Fleury noted the report was accepted without comment.

Steele stated the Mayor thought a commission workshop should be called to discuss the report. Ms. Steele noted the appointments are until January 2019.

Survey Update:

Ms. Fleury provided information related to the survey, noting approximately 90% of the respondents are city residents, with a majority, 52% supporting the direct election of the mayor and vice mayor as separate ballot item, a majority expressing a preference to keep the number of elected officials at 9. The survey also showed mixed opinions about the mix of at-large and ward representatives. The survey also indicated almost a 50/50 split related to staggered terms, with staggered terms just slightly higher. 1,300 total responses as of today. Majority hard copy responses. 73 for ungendered language. Term length close with 2 years at 57%.

Recommended Charter Amendments (to date) :

Committee Discussion

1. Direct Election of Mayor and Vice Mayor -

Champlin - good comment has something substantial changed that would indicate a need for a change, survey comments indicate no change is necessary, no compulsion to change, mostly ceremonial

McIlroy - agree with Mr. Champlin, we elect commissioner as a whole, if people voted for the representative; they have their vote as mayor also

Whitfield - if make any changes, the whole charter should be changed. Reading prior report and listening to comments, prefer to leave charter as is.

Steele will not require the charter be opened, put individual items to vote. Survey results, 30% wanted to continue with commission selecting the mayor, 17% wanted top vote getter to be mayor

Burton remind asked to come together on behalf of elected officials to make recommendation to consider items before us, don't think we come into this thinking that what we suggest is final, just a recommendation. Exercise to inform them of survey results and committee suggestions, leave to them to decide final determination. Our conversations align with the survey results, let commission know. Champlin confirm survey info will be available to the commission.

Schwarz what are options to consider, suggest inform we have had lively conversations, survey results, direct election is an option the commission should consider, recommendation of committee that the commission consider the positives and negatives of direct election.

Helmboldt addressing Harper comments, why are we considering this, what has changed, in 50 years learned a lot as a community, clear understanding what the current system has given us and what it has not. Better understanding what living in diverse community we have, racist foundations, use those learnings and new understandings is why these issues are important today. As to popular election of mayor and vice mayor, recommendation in prelim report, stated recommendation was direct election, but separate election for each position, mistake, We want system that promotes inclusion, if 2 at large positions would magnify the potential for the dominant population to win, but if together on same ballot, top vote getter is mayor, second vote getter would be vice mayor more chance to allow different representation among the representatives. Prefer one item with top and second vote getter

Antaya, thanked Mr. Harper, don't make decisions on recent trends, but do not believe we are doing this. Agree with top vote getter for mayor and vice mayor, hope they would be able to work together. What has changed is voter awareness increasing in the last several years, voters know a lot more about hidden forces that impact politics and our community, such as systemic racism. Now have greater understanding of systemic oppression. Also we are more aware of animosity issues with the current manner of nominating mayor. Also think the mayor's responsibility of assigning committees is important, and public may have more input on committee assignments

Moreno agree with Helmboldt suggestion, committee to make simple recommendation, but commission to determine the detail

Godfrey appreciate harper, but today general appreciation -----, but today population does not believe or support elected officials. Since last blue ribbon committee have heard constantly need for transparency. Do like the Helmboldt recommendation of

top and second vote getter for mayor and vice mayor. Look for general change of what people want in government.

Schwarz way commission constituted, legislative body, no strong executive. Past mayors did excellent job of bringing everyone together, but think it would be better if directly elected. In state senate, had majority vote for leader, good at directing senate to consider important issues, work together. My vote counted just as much as everyone else. Good to have someone elected to a leadership position. Let the people decide. Like to have some wording, BRAC recommends to the city commission, and have the CC consider direct election of the mayor. Move Burton, support Godfrey, leaving method of election of mayor to the commission. Opposed Champlin, Hanner, Whitfield, McIlroy. All other yes, motion passed.

2. Length of term: 2 or 4 years

Moreno 2 year term works best, voters will re-elect if stratified with elected official
Champlin 2 year eliminates need to staggered.

2 years not staggered, entire commission elected every 2 years, including mayor or vice mayor

Motion burton, adopt language as presented by Mr. Moreno, BRAC recommends terms of mayor, vice mayor and all commission 2 years, with elections held biannually. Support Tomak, unanimous. Terms not staggered, 2 years for all

3. Size of commission

Stay at 9 elected officials,

Motion Godfrey recommend to commission M and VM are at large, remaining 7 commissioner be ward commissioners, for total of 9 commissioners. Helmboldt support. Opposed Champlin and Drozdowski

Schwarz leave up to commission and GIS to draw lines for the wards

4. Godfrey, motion recommendation to commission change all language in charter to ungendered. All in favor, none opposed. Motion approved.

Schwarz asked that CM and CA create report, sent to committee for review and comment. Steele could submit report to committee members, if no objections to accuracy, then can submit report to commission. If objections, can call an additional meeting

Burton if responding to language different than what we voted on, would need to call a meeting. Hope the report reflects and is consistent with what was discussed and voted on.

Steele, yes,

Burelson, clear run down of what voted on today. Idea of when we can expect a communication from staff.

Helmboldt, will inform committee that review and response or objections are needed in timely manner as being presented to commission

Steele took quotes of comments made at meeting, want to ensure commission is aware of thoughtful reasoning,

Schwarz think committee members should attend the commission meeting and the workshop if possible, decisions come about thru strong debate, concise recommendations.

Moreno, by putting substance behind the information shows commission there was discussion among the group, careful thought.

Burelson thanked staff for preparing everyone, thanked committee members for participation and attendance. Excited about are recommendations, spirit of transparency, look forward to commission response

Helmboldt, good group, good participation, discussions may have changes some of our opinions. Good for our community.

Burton wondering is it prudent to put something on the calendar now to plan for a future meeting.

Fleury July 17th meeting earliest, July 11th if committee wanted to get back together

Tomak priveledge to get to know each and every one

Hanner I also changed my mind numerous times, great job presiding over the committee, keeping focused. Very interesting treated all comments with respect, no animosity.

Settle enjoyed the experience, showed spirit of the city, appreciate being part of the process

Schwarz thanking for taking duty seriousl, attendance

Public Comment:

Next Meeting: Wednesday, July 11, 2018 at DPW Multi-purpose Room, at 5:30 pm.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 6:39 p.m.