

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2017
SAN ANTONIO CENTRAL LIBRARY
6:00 PM**

Members Present:	Jeff Webster, <i>Chair</i> ; Councilmember Mike Gallagher, <i>District 10</i> ; John Gilbert, <i>Community Representative</i> ; Francisco J. Garza, <i>Municipal Law Expert</i> ; Sharon De La Garza, <i>Human Resources Expert</i> ; Frank M. Garcia, <i>Community Representative</i> ; Art A. Hall, <i>Former Elected Official</i> ; Margaret Anaglia, <i>Former City Employee</i> ; Patricia Rodriguez Oliver, <i>Community Representative</i>
Members Absent:	Richard Perez, <i>Community Representative</i> ; Juan Garcia, <i>Community Representative</i> ; Deborah Gray Marino, <i>Community Representative</i> ; Dr. Francine Romero, <i>Community Representative</i>
Others Present:	Camila Kunau, <i>Assistant City Attorney</i> ; Lina Rodriguez, <i>Executive Assistant to the City Clerk</i> ; John Peterek, <i>Assistant to the City Manager</i> ; Patrick Steck, <i>Projects Manager</i> ; Natalie Griffith, <i>Citizen</i> ; Rudy Neira, <i>Citizen</i> ; Audrey Fisher, <i>Citizen</i> ; Diane Duesterhoeft, <i>Citizen</i> ; Kate Hansen, <i>Citizen</i> ; Rhett Smith, <i>Citizen</i> ; Nikki Kuhns, <i>Citizen</i> ; Allen Townsend, <i>Citizen</i> ; Jack M. Finger, <i>Citizen</i> ; Antonio Diaz, <i>Citizen</i> ; Diane Uriegas, <i>Citizen</i> ; Eiginio Rodriguez, <i>Citizen</i> ; Stephen Lucke, <i>Citizen</i> ; Elena Guajardo, <i>Citizen</i> ; Patrick von Dohlen, <i>Citizen</i> ; Drew Galloway, <i>Citizen</i> ; Betty Eckert, <i>Citizen</i> ; John Butchkosky, <i>Citizen</i> ; Emilie Christian, <i>Citizen</i> ; Cecilia Gutierrez, <i>Citizen</i> ; Jim Campbell, <i>Citizen</i>

Chair Jeff Webster called the meeting to order and asked all members present to introduce themselves to the attendees.

1. Public Hearing on possible amendments to the City Charter

Mr. John Peterek gave a brief overview of the process to amend the City Charter and amendments made in 2015. He noted the current amendments being discussed, such as extending Council terms and changing election dates. He stated there was discussion regarding appointments for the Planning Commission and the Ethics Review Board. He discussed potential changes in Housing Bond issuance and the filing process for elected offices.

Chair Webster reminded citizens to limit their comments to three minutes.

Mr. Rudy Neira expressed concern that the Unified Development Code was not updated in a timely or thorough manner after City Council approval of amendments.

Ms. Duesterhoeft identified herself as a leader with COPS/Metro Alliance and requested an amendment to allow Municipal Bond funds to be used for owner-occupied housing rehabilitation. She noted challenges for fixed income residents needing home repairs in order to qualify for assistance programs.

Ms. Nikki Kuhns requested a change to Mayor-Council form of government to reduce City Manager control. She asked that citizens be given the power to recall any public official.

Mr. Alan Townsend identified himself as President of the Palm Heights Neighborhood Association and the Nogalitos Zaramora Coalition. He proposed that each Council District be divided into 20 Sub-Districts subject to election to improve involvement within the community.

Mr. Jack M. Finger stated his opposition to extending Councilmember term limits and changing election dates. He asked that term limits be limited to two 2-year periods. He suggested an amendment to allow recall votes for elected officials and ordinances with 10% of the number of voters from the previous election instead of 10% of registered voters.

Mr. Antonio Diaz expressed his agreement with Mr. Finger's proposals. He discussed his concern regarding bond funds and that the city does not involve the citizens sufficiently.

Mr. Rhett Smith requested the Charter acknowledge the indigenous heritage of the city and that public meetings and 'Citizens to be Heard' be broadcast to the public via the internet.

Ms. Diana Uriegas stated her opposition to changing election dates.

Ms. Natalie Griffith identified herself as President of Habitat for Humanity in San Antonio and expressed concern with the city's ability to provide affordable housing through the current bond process. She asked for a Charter amendment to allow for more affordable housing and owner-occupied rehabilitation. She stated her support for three 3-year, staggered terms for elected officials in order to alleviate voter fatigue.

Mr. Eiginio Rodriguez noted his disagreement with the number of required signatures for petitions. He requested amendments to Article IV to change the petition requirements.

Mr. Stephen Lucke requested that the Mayor and City Council salaries be raised and the City Manager and Deputy salaries be reduced. He stated his opposition to moving the election date to November in order to keep local elections non-partisan. He expressed support for three 3-year terms for Council. He suggested an increase to two Councilmembers per District. He asked that City Council meetings be moved throughout the City to increase accessibility. He noted concerns with campaign expenses and recommended lowering the voting age to 16 to increase engagement.

Ms. Elena Guajardo stated her opposition to extending term limits and changing the election dates. She noted concerns that the Planning Commission is overly developer-influenced. She expressed her dissatisfaction with city ethics and the lack of penalties for campaign-related violations.

Mr. Patrick von Dohlen thanked the Charter Review Commission for their service. He noted a public perception of lack of transparency and suggested amending the number of petition signatures to 20% of the previous election's voters. He asked that city boards and commissions be filled with private citizens to increase independent decision-making. He requested future bond materials discuss city debt.

Mr. Drew Galloway discussed the low level of youth civic engagement in city elections. He requested a change of the Municipal election date from May to November. He suggested staggering local elections every two odd-numbered years to reduce concerns about partisanship and allow voter consistency. He stated his support for lowering the local voting age to 16.

Ms. Betty Eckert expressed opposition to extending Council term limits. She requested an amendment to move Council meetings to evenings and require broadcasts of Citizens to be Heard. She asked that City, County, and utility employees be restricted from serving on boards, commissions, or advisory positions.

Chair Webster thanked citizens for their comments and explained that citizen suggestions would be assigned to subcommittees by subject matter for discussion and potential presentation to City Council.

Mr. Frank Garza stated that any citizen suggestions presented which did not receive consideration through the Commission could be placed on the Council Agenda by petition. He reminded attendees that Council would have the final decision regarding which amendments would be presented to the public for voting.

Councilmember Gallagher thanked the attendees for their participation and noted the upcoming changes in Councilmembers. He asked the public to communicate their suggestions to the new Councilmembers.

Chair Webster thanked the attendees again for their participation.

2. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Art Hall moved to approve the Minutes of the Charter Review Commission Meeting of May 15, 2017. Mr. Frank Garcia seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Discussion on Possible Charter Amendments and Citizen Input

Chair Webster discussed subcommittees and stated that Charter members would be free to attend all subcommittees in addition to any they are assigned. He added that citizen suggestions would be assigned to the appropriate subcommittee for consideration at the next meeting.

4. Discussion of future meetings including committees

Chair Webster asked Mr. John Gilbert to lead a Planning Commission Subcommittee. He requested that Mr. Art Hall lead an Ethics Subcommittee. He stated he and Mr. Garza would jointly lead a Legal Subcommittee encompassing changes in form of government, term limits, and election dates. Mr. Frank Garcia stated he would lead a Housing Subcommittee. Chair Webster asked the Subcommittee members to coordinate their schedules before the next meeting.

Mr. Hall expressed a desire for more information regarding Housing Bonds.

Mr. Frank Garza inquired if the Legal Subcommittee would investigate the legality of suggested Charter amendments. Chair Webster replied that they would identify what legally would and would not be possible to change via the City Attorney's Office.

5. Adjournment

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:21 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Webster, Chair

Lina Rodriguez, Office of the City Clerk