

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
Wednesday, July 10, 2019 – 8:00 a.m.
6FL.CONF. POTOMAC RIVER
Council Office Building

Minutes

Commission Members Present:

George Margolies, Chair
Laura Goddeeris, Vice Chair
Christopher Danley
Katherine Gugulis
David Hill
Larry Lauer
Susan Miles
Perry Paylor
Ronald Stubblefield
Nichole Thomas
Courtney Walker

Staff:

Jean Arthur, County Council
Edward Lattner, Office of the County Attorney
Marie Jean-Paul, County Council
Christine Wellons, County Council

Commission Chair George Margolies called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

I. Opening Remarks

Mr. Margolies acknowledged the presence of a quorum and welcomed Commission Members and staff.

The agenda was adopted without objection. The draft minutes of June 12, 2019 meeting were likewise approved without objection, having been sent out in advance to Commissioners.

Jean Arthur reminded Members that attendance is mandatory, and that each Member must take online training regarding the Open Meetings Act and parliamentary procedure.

Commission Members Hill and Lauer introduced themselves to the other Members and the staff.

II. Potential Topics for Charter Review Commission Consideration

Ms. Arthur explained that invitations were sent to the County Executive and to each Councilmember inviting them to attend a Commission meeting and to share any topics they would like the Commission to consider. A copy of one such letter was provided to Commissioners. Councilmember Reimer has forwarded one topic for consideration.

Mr. Margolies provided an overview of Councilmember Reimer's proposed topic, which is whether Section 305 of the Charter should be amended to provide a "health contingency" exception to the requirement that "all current Councilmembers" approve certain increases of real property taxes. Mr. Margolies stated that this suggestion, among all other topics identified by the Commission Members, will be considered at the Commission's September meeting.

Mr. Margolies invited each Member to suggest one or more Charter amendment topic(s) for consideration.

Mr. Danley proposed consideration of whether Sections 102 and 103 of the Charter should be amended to convert the four at-large Councilmember slots to be district-based slots. He stated that the County previously changed the composition of at-large versus district-based Councilmembers in the 1980s, and that population changes in the County warrant revisiting the issue.

Mr. Stubblefield suggested examining whether Section 206 of the Charter, regarding removal of the County Executive, should be amended to provide that criminal activity would be a basis for removing a County Executive.

Mr. Lauer suggested reviewing whether Sections 102 and 103 should be amended to provide for staggered terms of Councilmembers for purposes of continuity. Mr. Lauer also suggested Sections 510, 510A, and 511, regarding collective bargaining, as potential Sections for review, for being too specific.

Ms. Thomas suggested considering whether Sections 102 and 103 should be amended to increase the number of Councilmembers given population growth. She stated that she supports having a mix of at-large and district-based Members.

Mr. Paylor proposed reviewing whether Section 110 should be amended to provide for workforce housing and balanced growth throughout the County.

Mr. Hill proposed reviewing Section 314 regarding competitive procurement to add more prescriptive language, and suggested researching whether past Commissions have reviewed this topic. Mr. Hill also noted that Section 104, regarding redistricting, should be reviewed if Sections 102 and 103 are reviewed. Changes to Sections 102 and 103 might have implications for Section 104.

Ms. Goddeeris suggested reviewing Section 302 regarding the CIP process and fiscal policy. She asked whether the language of this section needs to be tightened and whether other amendments might be warranted. Ms. Goddeeris also proposed reviewing whether Section 410 should be amended to provide for explicit rights and protections for individuals who file ethics complaints.

Mr. Margolies proposed reviewing whether Section 203 should be amended to provide that an individual must have resided in the County for more than one year in order to qualify as a candidate for County Executive. He noted that other counties, including Prince George's County

and Anne Arundel County, have more robust residency requirements for their County Executives. Mr. Margolies also suggested reviewing Section 107 regarding whether the compensation of Councilmembers should continue to be determined by vote of the Council.

Ms. Gugulis proposed reviewing whether the Charter could be amended to provide for charter schools and a voucher system.

III. Administrative Items

Mr. Margolies reminded Members that the next Commission meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 11 from 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

The next meeting will be devoted to deciding upon [a] Charter amendment topic(s) for the Commission to consider in 2019-2020. Prior to the September meeting, staff will compile topics, identify overlaps, provide brief analyses of the topics, and identify whether the topics have been reviewed by prior Commissions. Also prior to the September meeting, Mr. Margolies and Ms. Goddeeris will meet with staff to discuss how to group the many topics thrown on the table; how to present the background to the topics insofar as they have been addressed in the past; how the Commissioners might approach deciding to make an issue one to formally consider this cycle for study and recommendation; and how to go about studying the issue(s) the Commissioners choose.

Meeting adjourned at 9:01 a.m.