

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
Wednesday, November 13, 2019 – 8:00 a.m.
6FL.CONF. POTOMAC RIVER
Council Office Building

Minutes

<p>Commission Members Present: George Margolies, Chair Laura Goddeeris, Vice Chair Christopher Danley Katherine Gugulis David Hill Larry Lauer Perry Paylor Ronald Stubblefield Nichole Thomas Courtney Walker</p> <p>Member Not Present: Susan Miles</p>	<p>Staff Present: Ed Lattner, Office of the County Attorney Marie Jean-Paul, Office of the County Council Christine Wellons, Office of the County Council</p> <p>Guests Present: Councilmember Evan Glass Andrea Parodi, Legislative Aide, Office of Councilmember Evan Glass</p>
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Commission Chair George Margolies called the meeting to order at 8:01 a.m.

I. Opening Remarks

Mr. Margolies acknowledged the presence of a quorum. The agenda was adopted without objection. The minutes of the October 2, 2019 meeting were adopted without objection.

II. Discussion with Councilmember Evan Glass

Councilmember Evan Glass spoke at the invitation of the Commission regarding Council size and composition under Sections 102 and 103 of the Charter. In particular, he addressed five questions posed by the Commission in a letter to Councilmembers dated October 17, 2019. First, the Commission had asked whether there is a significant difference in the expense of running for an at-large seat as opposed to a district seat on the Council. Councilmember Glass shared his experiences running for a district seat and later running for an at-large seat.

A campaign for an at-large seat requires communicating with approximately 1.1 million residents, whereas a campaign for a district seat requires communicating with approximately 225,000 residents. A direct mailing to likely voters, for example, would cost approximately \$40,000 in an at-large race, but would cost \$10,000-to-\$15,000 in a district race. In order to campaign successfully for an at-large seat, Councilmember Glass held 88 “meet and greets” with residents across the County to hear their priorities and concerns.

The Commission's second question was whether the County's population growth has affected the costs of campaigning. Councilmember Glass stated that the costs of campaigning have increased in general, not only because of population growth, but also because of the changing nature of campaigns. Increasingly, campaigns need to utilize multiple media platforms and have qualified campaign managers and field staff.

Third, the Commission asked about the effects of public campaign financing. Councilmember Glass described public financing as a "game changer" that allows candidates to focus attention on small individual donors.

Fourth, the Commission asked about whether population growth in the County has affected constituent services. Councilmember Glass stated that population growth has increased the demands on Council staff, which has not increased in size along with the population. Councilmember Glass stated that additional staff are needed.

Lastly, Councilmember Glass addressed strengths and weaknesses of the current Council structure. He emphasized that under the current structure, each resident may vote for a majority of the Councilmembers, and that this voter representation should not be diluted.

Councilmember Glass also noted that the Commission might wish to study the issue of rank choice voting.

III. Discussion of Campaign Finance and Campaign Costs

Staff provided to the Commission: (1) a PowerPoint presentation regarding campaign finance law; and (2) informational charts regarding campaign costs in recent elections. A discussion ensued regarding the importance of the data and its significance to consideration of the County Council structure. This was the first of Commission meetings devoted to several topics related to the composition of the Council (the issue selected for the Commission's workplan).

IV. Conclusion

The Chair stated that the next Commission meeting is scheduled for December 11, 2019.

The topics of the meeting will be (1) a comparison of other jurisdictions' Council sizes and compositions; and (2) scholarly literature on the sizes and compositions of legislative bodies. Dates and locations of community forums will be provided at the December meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 9:33 a.m.