

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
Wednesday, October 2, 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 Present: Ed Lattner, Office of the County Attorney Marie Jean-Paul, Office of the County Council Christine Wellons, Office of the County Council Guests Present: Kate Masters, <i>Bethesda Beat</i>
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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 September 11, 2019 meeting were adopted without objection.

II. Background Information on Sections 102 and 103 of the Charter

Staff presented two memoranda on information previously requested by Commission members. One memorandum summarized prior Commissions' consideration of Sections 102 and 103 of the Charter, as well as prior Charter amendments affecting those Sections. The other memorandum provided a timeline of the due dates for Commission reports, together with dates for the upcoming 2022 redistricting.

Mr. Lattner informed the Commission that if it were to recommend amendments to Sections 102 and 103 in the Commission's 2022 report (as opposed to the 2020 report), then the Commission also might wish to recommend temporary amendments to the redistricting procedure under Section 104. Otherwise, any amendments to Sections 102 and 103 would not go into effect until the 2032 redistricting.

III. Discussion of Topics for the Commission to Review and Study

Ms. Goddeeris moved to reconsider a motion that failed during the September 11, 2019 meeting, namely: whether to study for the 2020 report sections of the Charter related to the

composition of the Council (*i.e.*, the total number of Councilmembers, and the division of at-large versus district Members). Mr. Lauer seconded the motion. The motion passed by a vote of 7 to 3, with one member absent from the room. Voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Margolies, Ms. Goddeeris, Mr. Danley, Ms. Gugulis, Mr. Lauer, Ms. Miles, and Ms. Walker. Voting against the motion were Mr. Hill, Mr. Paylor, and Mr. Stubblefield. Ms. Thomas was absent during the vote.

Mr. Hill moved to amend the reconsidered motion in order to provide that the Commission will study the composition of the Council, including Sections 102, 103, and 104 of the Charter, without regard to whether any recommendations will be made in the 2020 report or in the 2022 report. Ms. Goddeeris seconded Mr. Hill's motion. The motion passed, with 7 voting in favor of the motion and 4 abstaining. The favorable votes were by Mr. Margolies, Ms. Goddeeris, Mr. Hill, Mr. Lauer, Mr. Paylor, Mr. Stubblefield, and Ms. Walker. The abstentions were by Mr. Danley, Ms. Gugulis, Ms. Miles, and Ms. Thomas.

Mr. Lauer moved for the Commission to adopt the amended motion, *i.e.*, for the Commission to study Sections 102, 103, and 104 of the Charter regarding the composition of the Council, without regard to whether the study will be completed by the 2020 report or the 2022 report. Mr. Stubblefield seconded the motion. The Commission voted unanimously (11-0) to adopt the motion.

The Chair invited members to propose any other topics for study. No additional proposals were made.

The Commission members discussed how to approach their review of Sections 102, 103, and 104. The Chair suggested, without objection, studying the sections as a committee of the whole. Ms. Goddeeris proposed holding focus groups regarding the composition of the Council. Mr. Hill suggested interviewing each current Councilmember as well as some past members. Mr. Paylor suggested holding 5 public hearings, one in each Council district, and Ms. Thomas concurred. Mr. Lauer suggested interviewing the County Executive in addition to Councilmembers.

The Chair invited members to list research that should be conducted before the next meeting. Ms. Thomas suggested looking into the cost of running a campaign; Mr. Lauer suggested researching best practices related to the size of districts in other metropolitan areas; Mr. Hill suggested looking into whether data is available regarding the responsiveness of Councilmembers to citizen complaints; and the Chair suggested reviewing scholarly literature regarding the size of districts, the benefits of at-large versus district seats, how to achieve diversity in membership, and campaign costs. The Chair also suggested reviewing the make-up of legislative bodies in nearby jurisdictions.

The Chair stated that the next Commission meeting is scheduled for November 13, 2019. Meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m.