

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
Wednesday, December 9, 2020 – 8:00 a.m.
Remote/Virtual Meeting via Microsoft Teams

Minutes

Commission Members Present:	Staff Present:
George Margolies, Chair	Ed Lattner, Office of the County Attorney
Laura Goddeeris, Vice Chair	Christine Wellons, Office of the
Christopher Danley	County Council
Katherine Gugulis	Marie Jean-Paul, Office of the County
David Hill	Council
Larry Lauer	
Perry Paylor	
Ronald Stubblefield	
Nichole Thomas	
Susan Miles	

Commission Chair George Margolies called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

I. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

Mr. Margolies acknowledged the presence of a quorum. The agenda was approved without objection. The minutes for November 18, 2020 were approved without objection.

II. CONTINUANCE OF DELIBERATING WHETHER TO ADD TOPICS TO THE COMMISSION'S WORKPLAN

Commission members discussed whether to add to their workplan the issue of whether the Council President should be elected at-large. Mr. Danley and Ms. Gugulis opposed adding the topic because it has been studied by the last several Commissions. Ms. Miles, Dr. Thomas, and Mr. Paylor favored studying other issues instead. Therefore, there was no consensus to take up the topic of an elected Council President.

Mr. Danley moved to add to the workplan an issue suggested by Councilmember Navarro: whether at-large Councilmembers should reside in different regions of the County. Mr. Hill and Mr. Paylor expressed that the issue would be too confusing to voters. Mr. Margolies added that the issue is premature because of recent changes to the Council membership. Ms. Goddeeris and Mr. Lauer also opposed studying the issue at this time.

Dr. Thomas stated that the District of Columbia has both quadrants and districts, and that a similar approach in the County would not be confusing and could increase representation. In favor of Mr. Danley's motion to add the issue to the workplan were Ms. Gugulis and Dr. Thomas. Opposed were Mr. Hill, Mr. Lauer, Ms. Goddeeris, Mr. Paylor, Mr. Stubblefield, Mr.

Margolies, and Mr. Danley. Ms. Miles abstained. Therefore, the motion failed (2 in favor -7 against – 1 abstention)

III. CONSIDERATION OF TOPICS AGREED UPON BY CONSENSUS

The Commission members discussed their first topic: Clarification of what happens when two ballot questions approved by the voters are irreconcilable.

Ms. Goddeeris discussed the topic and pointed to sample language of Anne Arundel County. The proposal would be that if there are conflicting Charter amendments approved by the voters, the one with the most favorable votes wins. Mr. Margolies stated that Missouri and Nevada have similar provisions in their constitutions.

Mr. Lattner pointed out that, even with a provision on conflicting amendments, there still might be litigation over whether particular amendments truly conflict with each other or could be harmonized.

Mr. Margolies asked staff to draft potential Charter amendment language for the Commission's consideration at its next meeting.

Commission members began a discussion of their second topic: Lengthening the residency requirement, and increasing the age requirement, for the County Executive.

Regarding increasing the 1-year residency requirement: Mr. Margolies expressed that 1 year was too short and pointed out that Prince George's County has a 5-year requirement, Anne Arundel County has a 4-year requirement, and Frederick County has a 2-year requirement. Mr. Hill, Mr. Lauer, and Ms. Gugulis were inclined to favor a 5-year residency requirement, both for the Executive and Councilmembers. Dr. Thomas suggested considering a 5-year requirement cumulatively over the prior 7 years. Mr. Paylor favored a 3-year residency requirement.

Regarding an age requirement for the Executive, Mr. Margolies stated that Prince George's and Frederick Counties have no age requirement. Anne Arundel, Harford, and Baltimore Counties requires a minimum age of 25. Mr. Hill stated his opinion that the Executive should be at least 35 years old to have sufficient life experiences for the position. Dr. Thomas stated that Joe Biden became a senator at 29 and did a fine job. Ms. Godderris and Ms. Miles agreed with Dr. Thomas's point and were not supportive of an age requirement. Mr. Lauer stated that the requirement should be 30 years.

IV. CONCLUSION

Mr. Margolies reminded the Commission that the next meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2021. The topic will be continued deliberation on topics agreed upon by consensus. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Additional information can be found on the official CRC website at
<http://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/crc/>