

Charter Commission Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2015

Chair Richard Kramer called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Chair Richard Kramer – Present
Vice-Chair Deborah Montgomery – Present
Commissioner Brian Alton – Present
Commissioner Bridget Faricy – Present
Commissioner Amy Filice – Present
Commissioner George Johnson – Present
Commissioner Sigrid Johnson – Present
Commissioner Joyce Maddox – present
Commissioner David Maeda – Present
Commissioner Jeff Mass – Present
Commissioner Gladys Morton – Present
Commissioner Charles Repke – Present
Commissioner Virginia Rybin – Absent
Commissioner John Van Hecke – Present
Commissioner Carrie Wasley – Present

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Approval of the agenda moved by Commissioner Repke, seconded by Amy Filice, adopted by unanimous vote

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Alton moved to approve minutes, seconded by Sigrid Johnson, adopted by unanimous vote

CITIZEN COMMENTS

1 – Invited Speaker – The Honorable Ruby Hunt

Ms. Hunt summarized an article that she wrote titled, “History of the Charter Commission”, explaining the original purpose in establishing the Charter Commission and their involvement with the Mayor and the City Council.

She explained her current concerns of the charter, and why there needs to be more involvement in the Mayor’s and City Council’s operations. Ms. Hunt explained that the St. Paul Issues Forum (SPIF) talked about a lack of transparency with issues such as Black Bear and Lilydale Park. Also the issue of abandoned swimming pools – she believes the City of Saint Paul should be embarrassed that the State had to take over the inspection of swimming pools, and the Mayor should have asked for a review of why we fail to meet the safety needs. The City Council needs

to become more active in ensuring that city departments, especially the Department of Safety and Inspections, are working properly and accurately to ensure proper performance by the departments. The Council Research department should be able to help the Council do the research to help oversee the affairs of the City beyond the Mayor, to work as a check and balance between the Council and the Mayor.

Commissioner Repke commented on past work of the Council Research team to help DSI get work done. At that time, all members of the Council Research team had Master's Degrees and did a large report.

Commissioner Faricy asked Ms. Hunt's opinion of having a part time Council, and its effectiveness on the Council. Ruby Hunt explained that this has been asked previously, and based on the complexity of the power of the City Council and the Mayor, that it should be considered a Full Time Council.

Vice-Chair Montgomery commented that being a part time Council Member isn't a matter of the amount of work that the individual does, because the issues that she addressed as a Council Member took full time hours.

Commissioner George Johnson reinforced Vice-Chair Montgomery's comment, and states that the pay for Council Member's should be increased from part time to full time to justify a good faith effort.

Ms. Hunt was thanked for her time and dismissed at 4:59 p.m.

REPORTS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEES

1 – Communication Committee

Has not met

2 – Charter Review Committee

Has not met

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Two years ago, in 2013, Charter Commission proposed to the City Council a proposal to amend the Charter, striking the words part time and eliminating the language on how many Legislative Aides each Council Member is allowed, also proposed to eliminate the salary language. City Council did adopt the salary amendment, but Mayor at the time did not want to remove the word part time or restrictive Legislative Aide language. The Council thought the Charter Commission should not have that much control and micro-management power. Chair Richard Kramer is recommending to approach this issue again after the upcoming election, where it can be sent to City Council for a required unanimous if so desired.

NEW BUSINESS

1 - Election of Charter Commission Officers

Chair – Commissioner Alton nominates Richard Kramer, elected by unanimous vote

Vice-Chair – Commissioner Repke nominated Deborah Montgomery, elected by unanimous vote

Secretary – Commissioner Repke nominated Virginia Rybin, elected by unanimous vote

OTHER BUSINESS

- 1- Commissioner Mass addressed the question from last meeting about his role as Charter Review chair. He agreed to do so. Chair Kramer recommended reconstituting the Charter Review Committee, and passed around a sheet for those interested to sign up. The two issues will be those already discussed for now, part time language and Legislative Aide restriction language.
- 2- Set November meeting –
Tentatively November 10th, 2015

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 5:07 p.m.