



## **Charter Review Commission Minutes**

Stow City Hall Boards and Commissions Room, Wednesday, August 12, 2015, 5:30 p.m.

**Members Present:** Andrea Denton, Robin Kory, Kelly Johnson, Nicole Walker, Annal Vyas, and Mary Botts

**Members Absent:** John Long and Tim Schofield

**Also Present:** Law Director Amber Zibritosky, Councilman Matt Riehl, and Jeff Saunders, Stow Sentry

Meeting called to order at 5:38 p.m. by Robin Kory

Ms. Kory said this meeting was about wrapping up everything and making sure it was ready for council and the ballot and possibly creating or requesting something to be added to the Stow Sentry so voters will know why we are doing things and explain what was going on.

The first change that we were requesting was public notice being added to the internet and it being more accessible for citizens.

The second was changing the terminology and closing the loophole from council seats for an eight year period and so you couldn't go from ward to at-large and back to ward. Eight years regardless with no switching. They take a two year break and then they can run for another eight years.

Ms. Kory said the last item was council term from two years to four years. What we were looking at was continuity of service, more time spent working, less time campaigning, less money spent on campaigns, and surrounding areas were four year terms. This will bring us in line with surrounding communities. Council can spend more time working and less time campaigning. Mr. Vyas said another reason was there was division between the commission members on this subject and all the council members that we interviewed, some wanting two years and some wanting four years, and members of the public were split on it, then maybe the public voters should decide and not just a group of people deciding whether it is two or four years.

Ms. Kory said we asked Ms. Zibritosky at the time what happens when someone who is at six years and we change it to four years, they have a maximum of eight years so how does that impact them? We were looking at the possibility of wording it so that they could run for ten and that would be okay but Amber said we could not do that. Ms. Zibritosky said it would be very difficult. I tried to think how we could do that and I kept on having trouble because there are two different sections that term limits are a different section entirely which you are also trying to amend and it was just hard. I think the best

way to address it is to pick when you want it to go into effect and the two most logical times was for the 2017 election or the 2019 election. After that year, you have a new Charter Commission. Ms. Kory said we picked 2017 initially. Amber said if you want to relook at that. You looked at the 2017 because it had them staggered because it had the result then of staggering the council elections on kind of off years, assuming both passed, you would have the council elections then in 2017 and have the mayoral and all the administrative elections in 2019 but you wouldn't have council in 2019, and in 2021 we would have council again but not the administration so it provides a staggering affect. That is why I think you all wanted that. Ms. Zibritosky said the 2019 would not stagger but would give you four years and everybody would be up at the same time which is actually what you have right now. Mr. Vyas said so if we did the effective date as 2019, then it would just mean really, the only change that would be made would be two to four years, it wouldn't be the staggering. If we used the effective date of 2017, then we get this ancillary situation which is also the staggering where the administrative and mayoral is at a different two years. Ms. Zibritosky said yes and it obviously impacts six out of seven of the councilman in 2017. Ms. Kory said I didn't think we meant to stagger them. Mr. Vyas said when we talked about it, I think there was that thought that hey, we talked a little bit about staggering and this was sort of a way to do both. Ms. Walker said we talked about the possibility that everybody who currently serves could be eliminated in an election if they weren't staggered so you would have an all completely new administration. Ms. Kory said I just don't want to cut off someone at six years, that was not the intent so I want to figure out a way to word it so that it says, don't cut off at 10 years or cut off at six years. Ms. Kory said we have around fifty examples in the Charter that read on this date you can do this but on this date you can do that. We are clarifying so much in here, why can't we add that? Ms. Zibritosky said why can't we put the date in, the date it goes into effect? Ms. Kory said but that loses the staggering. If we could adjust to say during this election year. Ms. Zibritosky said we could try to do that. Ms. Kory said we have six councilmembers right now that are going to be at six years in 2017. Ms. Kory said so if they win, they are at ten but we have limited them to eight. Mr. Vyas said so if we make the effective date four years from now, I see what you mean. We would not have the staggering but now we are back to everybody on the same timeframe. Ms. Zibritosky said you can't go six or ten, that contradicts the term limit section. Ms. Kory said again, that last section in reviewing, there are twenty different dates in that one section where people are adding to it. Can we do that same thing? Ms. Zibritosky said that is all in the same section. We could try something but I am not sure how it would be interpreted and I think it could become an issue in the future. I could see it being a debate in the City when things are not written well. I will try to write it but I think it could be difficult.

Mr. Vyas said it has to go to Council tomorrow. Ms. Zibritosky said yes. Mr. Vyas said if we do the effective date of 2019, and I know that is kicking it back down the road and it is not addressing the staggering issue, I don't know how important that is to everyone if we did have an effective date of 2019, that would take care of everything. Ms. Zibritosky said you may have one councilmember affected at that point but that is one versus six, and that is assuming he is going to be elected. This is assuming everyone is being re-elected. No one knows for sure on any of this. Ms. Denton said I am not hung up on the staggering to make it a big deal. I thought it was a good idea, it was a bonus. Ms. Walker said I agree, if this makes it simpler. If this has to go tomorrow, I don't think we

should have to put it on the Law Director to have to draft something tonight, I think that is asking a lot of her. Ms. Johnson said I am still thinking the effective date of 2019 is good.

Ms. Kory said so are we in agreement on amending it to say 2019 with the least amount of impact.

Motion to approve changing the following from 2017 to 2019 by Nicole Walker, seconded by Andrea Denton, motion passed 5-0.

SECTION 4.02 COMPOSITION AND TERM.

Council shall be composed of seven members. One member shall be elected by the electors of each of the four wards herein provided, and three members shall be elected by the electors of the Municipality at large.

Beginning with the regular municipal election in 2019, and continuing thereafter, each ward councilperson shall be elected for a term of four years, which term shall commence on January 2 next following his/her election, and he/she shall hold office until his/her successor is elected and qualified.

Beginning with the regular municipal election in 2019, and continuing thereafter, each at-large councilperson shall be elected for a term of four years, which shall commence on January 2 next following his/her election, and he/she shall hold office until his/her successor is elected and qualified.

Motion to adjourn by Kelly Johnson, seconded by Annal Vyas, meeting adjourned at 6:03 p.m.

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Mary Botts, Secretary

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Robin Kory, Chairperson