

**Charter Commission Public Hearing
May 12, 2022, 6:00 p.m.
Minutes**

Attendance

Commissioners					
Name	Present	Absent	Name	Present	Absent
Amira Streeter	Y		Debbie Kitchin	Y	
Andrew Speer	Y		Debra Porta	Y	
Anthony Castaneda	Y		Gloria Cruz	Y	
Becca Uherbelau	Y		Hanna Osman		Y
Brenda Ketah		Y	Melanie Billings-Yun		Y
Bryan Williams Lewis		Y	Raahi Reddy		Y
Candace Avalos	Y		Robin Ye		Y
Dave Galat	Y	Y	Salome Chimuku		Y
David Chen	Y		Vadim Mozyrsky		Y
David Knowles	Y		Yasmin Ibarra		Y

Staff Present			
Julia Meier	Allison Brown (JLA)	Diana Shiplet	Sofia Alvarez-Castro
Diana Nunez	Travis (JLA)		

Welcome

Co-Chair Cruz welcomed everyone and thanked them for attending. Allison welcomed the group and provided meeting logistics.

Commissioner Knowles thanked staff for their work and provided an overview of the Charter Commission work to date and the next steps in the process.

Commissioner Uherbelau gave a presentation of the currently proposed reforms.

Public Comment

Harriet Cook – Thanked the commission for their work. Stated she is here to fully support the phase one recommendations. For phase two, she supports including anti-racism, equity, and efforts to mitigate the climate crisis, including prioritizing environmental justice initiatives. She provided information from the IPPC regarding the need to reduce emissions. Including this work in the charter commission’s recommendations is an essential step in increasing resource efficiency to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. We need a governance structure able to deal with these issues.

Debbie Kay – Representing the League of Women Voters. The League supports expanding the size of council, using ranked choice voting, and ending commission form of government. First, they encourage the commission to clarify the budget process. Both the mayor and city council have important roles in the process. They recommend that council communicate program priorities, communicate with the public, and act as the budget committee. The mayor and city administrator should develop the budget based on council priorities and operational needs. Second, they would like the commission to clarify the authorities of mayor and council, specifically those designated to “the city”. Finally, they encouraged the

commission to review the section related to replacement of city leaders in an emergency. Thanked the commission for their work.

Nicholas Clark – Questioned whether the commission had looked into neighborhood association system and if they could be integrated better into the charter. There are currently 94 neighborhood associations. He encouraged the expansion of the number of neighborhood associations and increasing their role and involvement in the charter. He provided history of neighborhood association work and advocacy in the city of Portland gathered by the League of Women Voters.

Erica Lyon- Stated she is with STAR voting and that it is an improvement over on ranked choice voting. She stated that, in contrast to ranked choice voting which can only give one ranking to each candidate, STAR voting can give the same score to multiple candidates or leave a candidate unranked. STAR is simpler to implement – it only requires simple arithmetic. Like ranked choice voting, STAR voting eliminates the primary but allows voters to express their full opinions easier.

Bob Weinstein – Thanked the commission for their work. Stated he agrees with most of the proposals – particularly changing the role of city council being almost exclusively a legislative body. He encouraged the commission to have an odd number of council members to prevent deadlock on issues. He encouraged the commission to increase the total number of districts for greater representation. He stated that the proposal does not give the mayor enough authority and that the mayor should have veto power. Urged the commission to not combine ranked choice voting with form of government recommendations on the ballot.

Shelly Larkins – State she is excited that commission is doing this work – particularly in form of government, size of council, and district-based elections. She stated she is concerned with multiple members in a district and that this with ranked choice voting will increase confusion. She doesn't understand what problem the commission is trying to solve for and doesn't understand the usefulness of ranked choice voting in non-partisan elections. She suggested that the commission first move forward with government structure and size of council before considering changing the elections system.

Tony Magrogan – He is happy with the direction of the commission's work. Stated that he is worried about accountability, particularly with multi-member districts. If you can't point the finger at one councilor for not solving problems, you can't hold them accountable.

Audrey Zunkel-deCoursey – Thanked the commissioners for the important changes proposed. She is particularly appreciative of the proposed change in form of government. She stated that people these days seem to be looking for someone to blame but blaming individuals obscures the problem of a system of government which is the biggest barrier we face. She stated that she believes current commissioners are doing the best they can in a system not designed to help them succeed. She encouraged the commission to provide more role clarity for Mayor and Council and provided an example of contract authority, stating that Council should have a role in contracting. She stated that members of the public also need to know that there will be ample opportunities for public involvement in city government.

Babs Vanelli – Stated she is fully supportive of the proposed changes. Stated that she expects there will be issues and things needing work, but this is a work in progress. She appreciated the timeline for implementation.

Tim Larson – Is supportive of everything the commission has done but has concerns with multiple representatives in districts. He provided information about his prior experience in a districted city which to city-wide elections and how that left many community members out of access to response from elected representatives. Stated he would like to see 12 representatives from 12 separate districts. Stated he isn't convinced that the changes to the form of government will solve Portland's problems because the community continues to accept unacceptable behaviors.

Terry Harris – Stated he is against multi-member districts and that four districts would be too large. In other cities council members are neighborhood activists and representatives and a voice for the district as well as being the eyes and ears for the government within the districts. He stated that issues should filter up efficiently, which can only be done when the size of districts are small with only one point of contact. Stated that small districts are also less costly for candidates to run for office and will diminish the influence of money in an election.

Anne Feeney – Stated she agrees that multi-member districts are not the way to go. She stated she used to be the Multnomah County Auditor, so understands the complexity of running for office. There should be many more districts with only one person representing each district. She stated she doesn't understand why the mayor doesn't have a vote along with the Council, particularly as there needs to be an uneven number of councilors. She is leery of having three members representing a district but supports ranked choice voting and adding a city administrator to run the city.

Joan H. – Thanked the commission for their efforts. Stated that because she is unclear about how the ballot title for these proposed changes will be presented to the voters, she is worried about people voting it down because they are not in support of all issues of the proposal. She encouraged the commission to have the ballot titles separate so that Portlanders can vote yes or no on different components. She also does not support multi-member districts.

Laurie Rogoway – Thanked commission for their hard work. Stated she is devastated by what has occurred in Portland in the last few years. Stated that Portland doesn't have the luxury of time the problems are immediate, and we can't afford to elect a large group of officials who do not know how to work together. Stated we need retain a small council who should set aside all other issues to focus only on homelessness and crime. First, they should give everyone who wants to be off the streets the ability to receive shelter and appropriate services. Second, for those who want to remain on the streets should be encouraged to leave the state unless they have a history in Oregon because we should not be spending city or state dollars on those who move here from other states because Oregon is such an easy dime. Third, we need a police force of appropriate size and to let them do their job without elected official interference. She stated she believes that the proposals will fail if put on the ballot now as-is.

Ashley – Stated she is in support of ranked choice voting and agrees with others about putting that portion of the recommendation on the ballot separately. She stated that having city council be an odd number makes more sense, even if that means increasing council to 15 members spread across five districts. The most important aspect is making sure that there is a balanced, equitable, and diverse representation on council. There is evidence that women and those from different ethnic or religious backgrounds are more likely to be elected in multi-member districts, which she supports. She is curious how accountability will be adhered to but does not believe that pointing a finger at any one person is helpful without proper recourse. It's fine to point three fingers at three people, so long as there is a structure in place to hold those three people accountable.

Pak – Commended the commission for the proposed reforms. Stated she has long been a supporter of change for all levels of government. Agrees with having more districts and wants to ensure that the districts are proportioned according to population, even if some are geographically larger than others. She would like to know if Mayor could be the tie breaking vote on Council decisions, which can help keep him in the know.

Commission Closing Remarks

Commissioner Castaneda thanked everyone who participated in the meeting and gave input. He reminded everyone of upcoming public input opportunities and provided an overview of public comments given. Commissioner Streeter thanked all the testifiers for their input.

Commissioner Cruz offered thanks to staff, Open Sign, and those who provided input and adjourned the meeting.

Next Steps

Next Public Input session will be held on May 17, 2022.

Meeting adjourned, 7:55 p.m.

Minutes respectfully submitted,
Diana Shippet, Executive Assistant to the CAO and CFO

Chat

17:44:56 From fardowsa -Somali nterpretor abukar to Hosts and panelists:

Hi everyone is Fardowsa Abukar

18:03:53 From fabio.interpretations@gmail.com to Sofia, Charter Staff(Direct Message):

hello. im the Spanish interpreter. sorry. I had some technival difficulties loggingin

18:04:16 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Allison Brown, facilitator(Direct Message):

wiat

18:04:18 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Allison Brown, facilitator(Direct Message):

in person

18:04:20 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Allison Brown, facilitator(Direct Message):

cant hear us

18:04:29 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Allison Brown, facilitator(Direct Message):

they are working on it

18:08:05 From Open Signal to Hosts and panelists:

We are working on the audio situation

18:08:53 From Amira Streeter to Everyone:

Thank you Open Signal for making this hybrid meeting possible!

18:19:38 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Everyone:

To our folks in the virtual audience who are here for public comment, please make sure your Zoom name is the same name you signed up to give comment for! You can do that my hovering over your name in the participants window, and selecting 'Rename'

18:20:14 From ASL 1 to Hosts and panelists:

switch

18:30:33 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Everyone:

<https://www.portland.gov/omf/charter-review-commission>

18:30:47 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Everyone:

<https://www.portland.gov/omf/charter-review-commission/charterhearings>
18:31:53 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Allison Brown, facilitator(Direct Message):
there are two League women of voters on the attendees tab
18:32:13 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Sofia, Charter Staff(Direct Message):
Yep, I see that. I think we ask for them to raise a hand when we want to bring them in
18:32:22 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Everyone:
monthly email updates: <https://www.portland.gov/omf/charter-review-commission/resources/sign-monthly-charter-commission-email-updates>
18:36:53 From Travis R., Facilitator Support, JLA to Sofia, Charter Staff(Direct Message):
Sofia, not seeing Debbie Kaye in the attendees list, she's green on the excel
18:37:38 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Travis R., Facilitator Support, JLA(Direct Message):
shes the league women of voters
18:37:41 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Travis R., Facilitator Support, JLA(Direct Message):
but idk which one
18:39:07 From Gloria Cruz to Everyone:
Is the BlueSky Timer enabled?
18:39:12 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Everyone:
WE have Harriet, Debbie and Babs to start us off, then we'll continue with Nicolas
18:39:35 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Everyone:
Timer is frozen! trying to fix it!
18:43:45 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Sofia, Charter Staff(Direct Message):
Harriet Cooke is on the list twice...I'm guessing that's an error?
18:44:03 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Allison Brown, facilitator(Direct Message):
yep
18:44:09 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Sofia, Charter Staff(Direct Message):
Thx!
18:46:08 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Everyone:
Next up, we'll hear from Erica and Bob W
18:46:27 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Sofia, Charter Staff(Direct Message):
Which one is Bobbie Benavidez?
18:47:07 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Allison Brown, facilitator(Direct Message):
oh maybe they left
18:47:17 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Sofia, Charter Staff(Direct Message):
Ahh ok, thx
18:47:27 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Travis R., Facilitator Support, JLA(Direct Message):
can you double check my green highlights?
18:48:37 From Travis R., Facilitator Support, JLA to Sofia, Charter Staff(Direct Message):
sure thing, I think laurie might be here as laurieandburt? I'll check the rest
18:49:44 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Everyone:
We'll go to Bob W, then Shelley next
18:49:59 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Allison Brown, facilitator(Direct Message):
help me give me a sec or two buffer so I can start the timer ?
18:50:05 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Sofia, Charter Staff(Direct Message):
Sure thing
18:53:41 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Everyone:
We've got Shelley, Tony, Tim and Audrey coming up
19:03:47 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Travis R., Facilitator Support, JLA(Direct Message):
remind me, did harriet go?

19:04:26 From Travis R., Facilitator Support, JLA to Sofia, Charter Staff(Direct Message):
Yes, I believe she was one of the first to go

19:04:42 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Travis R., Facilitator Support, JLA(Direct Message):
ok that's whay I thought, she was on it twice

19:08:25 From Julia Meier to Everyone:
Upcoming Charter Commission meetings: the evenings of May 31, June 6 and June 14. You can listen in through a zoom link posted on our webpage. All meetings are recorded and available on our webpage.

19:09:12 From Debbie Kitchin to Everyone:
Our deliberations with the city attorney's office should all be in public meetings.

19:10:00 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Everyone:
Link to all of our upcoming meetings: <https://www.portland.gov/omf/charter-review-commission/events>

19:13:42 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Everyone:
Terry, Anne and Joan, then Laurie

19:14:38 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Allison Brown, facilitator(Direct Message):
no one in person

19:14:43 From Allison Brown, facilitator to Sofia, Charter Staff(Direct Message):
thanks!

19:47:39 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Everyone:
<https://www.portland.gov/omf/charter-review-commission/charterhearings>

19:47:44 From Debbie Kitchin to Everyone:
Thanks to the staff, interpreters, Open Signal, people who came to comment and my fellow commissioners!!

19:50:19 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Everyone:
Public hearings information: <https://www.portland.gov/omf/charter-review-commission/charterhearings>

19:50:42 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Everyone:
Email to CharterReview@portlandoregon.gov

19:50:47 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Everyone:
Phone call to 311

19:50:52 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Everyone:
In writing to the: Office of Management and Finance, Charter Review, 1120 SW 5th Avenue, Room 901,Portland, OR 97204

19:51:05 From Sofia, Charter Staff to Everyone:
The public comment period closes at 5:00pm on Monday, May 30th

19:52:01 From Brenda Ketah to Everyone:
Thanks everyone!

19:52:42 From Spanish Interpreter, Regular to Sofia, Charter Staff(Direct Message):
Have good night everyone

19:52:54 From Candace Avalos to Everyone:
thanks bye