

# City Charter Review

City Council Meeting  
June 8, 2021

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# Background

- Santa Rosa is a Charter City
- Original City Charter was adopted by the voters in 1872
- City Charter is, in essence, our local constitution
- Within the City limits, Charter has the force and effect of state law

# Background

- California Constitution “home rule” provision authorizes adoption of City Charter
- City Charter may address wide range of municipal affairs
- Subject to preemption by state law on matters of statewide interest

# Background

- City Charter is effective only upon ratification by the voters
- Subject to amendment pursuant to state law and Charter provisions
- Amendments may be proposed by the City Council or by initiative

# Opportunity for Charter Review

- Section 12 of City Charter provides for review and revision of the Charter every ten years
- Last Charter revision began in 2011 and resulted in proposed revisions placed on the November 2012 ballot
- City now eligible to begin new Charter review

# Procedures for Charter Review

- Section 12 of City Charter provides that Charter review is to be led by a committee appointed by the City Council
- State law allows for that process
- State law requires at least two public hearings prior to placement of any proposed Charter revisions on the ballot

# Procedures for Charter Review

- Notice of the public hearings must be provided at least 21 days prior to the date of the hearing
- The two public hearings must be separated by at least 30 days
- At least one of the public hearings must be held outside of normal business hours
- Council must not take final action until at least 21 days after the second public hearing

# Scope of Charter Review

- Charter review may consider revisions, additions or deletions of Charter provisions
- Any proposed changes to the Charter are subject to voter approval



# Sample Process 2012 Charter Review

- Charter review process began in late spring/early summer 2011
- Charter Review Committee created by Council resolution on August 2, 2011
- Committee comprised of 21 citizens, with each Council Member appointing three committee members
- Mike Senneff appointed Chair

# Sample Process

## 2012 Charter Review

- Council's August 2, 2011 Resolution identified eight possible issues for Committee to discuss
- Committee appointments were made quickly and the Committee began its work in September 2011
- Committee met twice monthly for about nine months
- Tremendous amount of work done both by the Committee and City staff

# Sample Process

## 2012 Charter Review

- At the end of the process, four ballot measures were presented to the voters in the November 2012 election
- Three of the four measures passed:
  - Measure Q: District Council Members Elections (failed)
  - Measure R: Binding Arbitration for Police and Fire Employee Disputes (passed)
  - Measure S: Design Build Procurement (passed)
  - Measure T: Charter reorganization, update and clarifications (passed)

# Opportunities for Council Direction

- Timing for Charter review
- Potential composition of Charter Review Committee
- Preferred procedures
- Potential issues for consideration by Charter Review Committee
- Next steps

**QUESTIONS?**