



City of Santa Rosa

City Charter Review Committee Regular Meeting Minutes - Draft

Wednesday, January 19, 2022

5:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Cisco called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Present 17 - Chair Patti Cisco, Committee Member Lisa Badenfort, Committee Member Scott Bartley, Committee Member Christine Byrne, Committee Member Dan Condon, Committee Member Abigail Cunningham, Committee Member Ana Diaz, Committee Member Jazmin Gudino, Committee Member Jen Klose, Committee Member Brian Ling, Committee Member Chris Mazzia, Committee Member Evette Minor, Committee Member Ernesto Olivares, Committee Member Logan Pitts, Committee Member Jocelyn Villalobos, Committee Member Mark Walsh, and Committee Member Karen Weeks

Absent 4 - Committee Member Adriana Arrizon, Committee Member Annie Barbour, Committee Member Danny Martinez, and Committee Member Ron Miller

Committee Member Barbour joined the meeting at 5:09 p.m.

Committee Member Martinez joined the meeting at 5:20 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA MATTERS

Joe Leadem spoke asking the Committee to consider amending the Charter to lower the signature requirements for referendums and initiatives, expressed it would be more democratic, lead to better community wide decision making, and asked for a special meeting for the issue to be discussed.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 December 15, 2021, Regular Meeting.

Approved as submitted.

3.2 January 5, 2022, Regular Meeting.

Approved as submitted.

4. SCHEDULED ITEMS

4.1 EQUITY PRINCIPLES

The principles of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging remain in the forefront of the Charter review process. This standing agenda item provides the Committee with the opportunity, at the outset of each of its meetings, to refine, reaffirm and recommit to its Statement of Principles. The Statement of Principles regarding diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging provides a procedural and substantive lens through which the Committee undertakes all of its work.

Socorro Shiels, Diversity, Inclusion & Equal Employment Officer, asked the Committee if there were any changes to the principles. There were no changes made and Ms. Shiels stated they would be finalized.

No public comments were made.

4.2 DIRECT ELECT AT-LARGE MAYOR

The City Council has recommended that, among other topics, the Committee research and consider preparing a Charter amendment to establish the position of an elected at-large Mayor, a Mayor elected by a City-wide vote.

Currently, the City Council is comprised of seven Council members, each elected by district. After each Council election, the Council itself selects one of its members to serve as Mayor for a two year term. The Mayor serves at the pleasure of the Council and can be removed from the Mayorship by a vote of the Council.

Under this proposal, the City Charter would be revised to create the new position of at-large Mayor. The City Council would likely be reconfigured such that six Council members would be elected by district and the Mayor would be selected by the voters in a single City-wide vote. Under this scenario, the current seven Council districts would be reduced and realigned into six districts. Other configurations, however, may be considered, including, for example, retaining all seven district Council members and adding an at-large Mayor as an eighth member of

the City Council.

This agenda item will outline the steps entailed in moving to a directly elected at-large Mayor, the pros and cons of having a directly elected Mayor, the possible roles and responsibilities of a directly elected Mayor and a review of possible Council configurations.

City Attorney Sue Gallagher and Assistant City Attorney Rob Jackson presented information on the current composition of the Council, the role and responsibilities of the Mayor and Vice Mayor, a proposal for an elected Mayor and answered questions from Council.

Discussion ensued on concerns having a direct elected mayor could be detrimental to equity issues with the risk of diluting district elections, a direct elected mayor being in conflict with district elections, the changing nature of a mayor's job responsibilities, concerns representation will revert back to where the city was prior to district elections, an elected mayor possibly adding another layer of approval before things can get accomplished, the possibility of making the direct elected Mayor a non-voting member of the Council to balance the power on the Council, a direct elected mayor may affect the ability to recruit a quality person for the City Manager position, the merits of a rotational appointment process allowing for team building and collegiality, the current appointment system working, having someone accountable for every resident of the city, giving district elections a chance to get established and work before making a major change, the possibility of having undocumented residents vote in local elections, adding procedures for removal of a mayor for misconduct, and changing the charter to be reviewed every five to seven years instead of 10.

No public comments were made.

5. COMMITTEE CHAIR'S/CITY ATTORNEY'S REPORTS

No reports were made.

6. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS - NONE.

7. WRITTEN AND/OR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS - NONE.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- At-Large Mayor with Speakers
- Council Compensation
- Ranked Choice Voting

No public comments were made.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cisco adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m. The next meeting will be held on February 2, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.

Approved on:

Stephanie A. Williams
City Clerk