



City of Santa Rosa

City Charter Review Committee Regular Meeting Minutes - Final

Wednesday, February 2, 2022

5:00 PM

1. CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Chair Cisco called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

Present 15 - Chair Patti Cisco, Committee Member Adriana Arrizon, Committee Member Annie Barbour, Committee Member Lisa Badenfort, Committee Member Christine Byrne, Committee Member Dan Condon, Committee Member Ana Diaz, Committee Member Jazmin Gudino, Committee Member Jen Klose, Committee Member Brian Ling, Committee Member Chris Mazzia, Committee Member Ernesto Olivares, Committee Member Logan Pitts, Committee Member Jocelyn Villalobos, and Committee Member Karen Weeks

Absent 6 - Committee Member Scott Bartley, Committee Member Abigail Cunningham, Committee Member Danny Martinez, Committee Member Ron Miller, Committee Member Evette Minor, and Committee Member Mark Walsh

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

Committee Member Martinez joined the meeting at 5:25 p.m.

Committee Member Walsh joined the meeting at 5:53 p.m.

2. PUBLIC COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA MATTERS

No public comments were made.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES - NONE.

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.

Attachments: [Attachment 1 - Updated Equity Principles](#)
[Attachment 2 - Equity Priority Areas with Council Districts](#)
[Attachment 3 - Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging Definitions \(City of Santa Rosa\)](#)

This is a standing item on the agenda. No presentation was made at this meeting.

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 the voters in 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 an elected at-large Mayor. The City Council would be reconfigured to accommodate the new position. Several options for reconfiguration might be considered, including: (a) restructuring the Council such that six Council members are elected by district and the Mayor is elected by a single City-wide vote (under this scenario, the current seven Council districts would be reduced and realigned into six districts); or (b) retaining all seven district Council members and adding the 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 the legal limitations on Council reconfiguration.

Attachments: [Attachment 1 - NLC - Cities 101 - At-Large and District Elections](#)
[Attachment 2 - Editorial - An at-large San Mateo mayor worth exploring](#)
[Attachment 3 - California Voting Rights Act - M.Leoni Presentation](#)
[Attachment 4 - Ballotpedia - Laws permitting noncitizens to vote](#)
[Presentation](#)
[Late Correspondence \(Uploaded 2-2-2022\)](#)

City Attorney Sue Gallagher provided information clarifying a mayor's power and position, the Voting Rights Act implications and the Act's four key elements of At-large election system, presence of protected classes, racially polarized voting, impairment of voting influence, and information on voter turn-out by District for the 2020 election. City Attorney Gallagher presented information on possible implications for an At-Large Mayor, and information for later consideration by the Committee on the removal of a mayor for misconduct, voting rights for undocumented individuals, more frequent charter amendments, and the scope of responsibilities for a mayor.

Petaluma Mayor Teresa Barrett and San Rafael Mayor Kate Colin provided information on their experiences, on the pros and cons of being an At-large directly elected Mayor, and answered questions from Committee members.

No public comments were made.

Discussion ensued on if a problem exists that having a directly elected mayor will solve, if the average resident knows who the mayor is in the city, a directly elected mayor being a symbol in the community, an appointed mayor possibly not being viewed by constituents and colleagues as having the same power authority as elected officials, providing residents the opportunity to vote for two council members instead of one, mitigating inequities in the election process, possible term limits for the Mayor, raising Council member compensation to a middle-class wage to allow for more equity of candidates, changing campaign contribution limits, amendments to the charter being implemented in phases, and changing charter amendments to happen more frequently than every 10 years.

A straw vote was taken on whether or not to support putting a measure on the ballot for a directly elected mayor. Ten Committee members present did not support, and seven members present were in support. Chair Cisco will provide the City Council the Committee's decision to not move forward with a ballot measure for a directly elected mayor on the ballot.

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

Chair Cisco reported she provided an update to the City Council at their meeting on January 25, 2022, on the Committee's progress and process to date, and shared Council Member Natalie Rogers thanks and praise to the Committee for their service and commitment to this process.

Attachments: [Proposed Schedule \(Uploaded 2-2-2022\)](#)

6. SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS - NONE.

7. WRITTEN AND/OR ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS - NONE.

8. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

City Attorney Gallagher reviewed a proposed schedule of the topics for Committee discussion with May 11 being the Committee's last meeting. Future agenda items are:

- Ranked choice voting for Council member elections
- Council Compensation
- the Omnibus measure including the allowance for a two-year budget process

The Committee will decide on their next priorities for discussion.

No public comments were made.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Cisco adjourned the meeting at 7:39 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2022, at 5:00 p.m.

Approved on: February 16, 2022
/s/ Stephanie A. Williams, City Clerk