

GARDNER CHARTER COMMITTEE FEBUARY 16th MEETING MINUTES

Committee Members Present:

Attorney Robert Rice
Neil Janssens
Alan Agnelli

Also Present:

Mayor Michael J. Nicholson
Colin Smith

I. Call to Order: Robert Rice called the meeting to order at 3:00pm

Bob Rice: The next item on the agenda is the review and discussion of City Charter and proposed amendments. Is there any discussion on this agenda item?

Mayor Nicholson: Thank you very much Mr chairman. Included in your packet is the current city Charter as it stands as well as the different amendments that have been proposed throughout the several different reviews of the charter that was done by the Collins Center by the City Council, both of those being in 2015, along with the correspondence from the Law Department as to which section of the charter are currently in conflict with State law versus those that are still valid. Also contained are suggestions, some of them are urgent versus some are not as urgent as others but those I plan to bring up whenever the public hearing is scheduled by the committee along with some concerns from the different department heads that you know deal with the city charter I'm guessing will come up at that time as well. Where this is 100 year old document there are several sections that do come in current conflict with state law. That's one of the reasons why proposal is put forward to create this committee to see what was able to be updated to bring into line with current practices in the city and how we can better approve the operation of the government now.

Bob Rice: I understand we will be having a public hearing. I will be setting the date for that and I anticipate your testimony at that time Mr Mayor as well as council president Kazinskas prior to that meeting. Is there anything that you would like to direct our attention to?

Mayor Nicholson: The bulk of the things that I'll be testifying on are included in my suggestions that are included in the packet. That's just going through Section by section of the charter and coming up with things that either could get changed or suggested edits that are there and I'll go through those in more detail too through that packet. There's been a couple of other things that have come up in discussions with the different department heads that we have here as well as some of the chairs of our boards and commissions in terms of after they've been appointed when they come to get sworn in if there should be a timeline if someone doesn't show up. I think the

most important thing to look at is the correspondence from the Law Department that was sent in 2015 that really goes in an in-depth look at the charter as to what's currently in conflict with existing laws.

Bob Rice: Very good Mr Mayor, based on your deep knowledge of the issues that are going to be presented and discussed at the public hearing, do you think that it is feasible that we will be able to conclude our initial business at one public hearing?

Mayor Nicholson: I believe so, I mean it all depends on how many from the public show up to the hearing but I believe it should.

Bob Rice: Would it be fair of this committee to set rules for testimony? In other words to limit testimony by setting a time limit that each person who testifies must stay within a time?

Mayor: As far as I'm aware that can be decided by the committee. Thank you very much for your timing service and getting this out and I look forward to seeing what the committee comes up with and if there's any other questions I'm happy to be here and my office is always happy to help.

Bob Rice: Thank you. Members of the committee, is there any other discussion of the preliminary nature under article 3 that we need to deal with before scheduling the next hearing?

Alan Agnelli: Inquired about a desired timeline for the Committee's work and inquired about the logistics of the committee receiving public feedback.

Mayor Nicholson: Mayor Nicholson expressed that he would ideally like to get the committee's final recommendations on the November ballot for the city election if changes were recommended and approved by the council, though he expressed that a project of this nature should take as long as necessary. He also invited the committee members to correspond with Colin Smith regarding public input. He outlined some resources available to the Committee, including the City's Law Department

Bob Rice: clarified that the committee would be presenting a report to the City Council who would then act on that recommendation. He suggested that it was not the purview of the committee to draft legislation. He asked if Mayor Nicholson would be the conduit of comments from Department Heads, which the Mayor confirmed he would be. He proposed a public hearing be scheduled in one week's time in the City Council Chambers.

Neil Janssens made a motion to that effect and it was seconded by Alan Agnelli.

Alan Agnelli inquired as to the logistics of posting the meeting and confirmed it would be the Mayor's Office responsibility.

A motion was made to adjourn by Mr. Agnelli and seconded by Mr. Janssens.