

CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING

January 24, 2011

Portland City Hall, Rose Room

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jeffrey Bissonette

Jan Campbell

Cassie Cohen

Justin Delaney

Sue Dicile

Justin Delaney

Brian Heron

Tricia Knoll

David Martinez

Hank Miggins

Lai-Lani Ovalles

Ayoob Ramjan

Shelli Romero

Tricia Tillman

Steve Weiss

Mark White, Co-Chair

Anita Yap, Co-Chair

MEMBERS EXCUSED

Steve Abel

Rebecca Kirk

Bonny Mcknight

STAFF: Commissioner Amanda Fritz, Milena Hermansky, Vanessa Holguin, Linly Rees, Grace Uwagbae.

Co-Chair Mark White called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

1. Group Swearing In of Commissioners

Susan Parsons, Assistant Council Clerk to the City of Portland, administered the oath.

2. Welcome and Introductions

Committee and audience members introduced themselves with a brief bio statement.

3. Welcome from Commissioner Amanda Fritz

Portland City Commissioner Amanda Fritz welcomed the group and provided history and context of the Charter Commission:

When the voters chose in 2007 to update several parts of the Portland City Charter, effective 2009, a new section was adopted requiring the appointment of a Charter Review Commission in January 2011. However, since that time, two noteworthy events have occurred:

- 1) Portland citizens—and the City budget—have been hit by an economic recession; and
- 2) The Portland Plan came in progress, with citywide, broad outreach to discuss who we are and what we want Portland to be in 2035 -- a process expected to take at least one more year before final review and adoption of the Plan by Council

For these reasons, City Council is planning a two-part charter review process:

- 1) The current Commission, created by Resolution in December 2010, is intended to operate with a limited timeframe and budget, and focus on three items:
 - Housekeeping amendments for the upcoming May and November ballots;
 - Provide advice to the Council on how to encourage participation and applications to be appointed for the second Charter Commission; and
 - Develop a list of issues with policy implications, to be discussed by the second Charter Commission formed after the conclusion of the Portland Plan.

Commission discussion included: How to stay informed and up-to-date on the Portland Plan, and the relationship between the current Charter Commission and the Portland Plan.

4. Election of Chairs

Mark White and Anita Yap were temporarily appointed as Commission Co-Chairs by Commissioner Fritz.

MOTION: Ms. Sue Dicile moved, and Mr. Hank Miggins seconded, that members accept the recommendation and formally appoint Mr. White and Ms. Yap as Charter Commission Co-Chairs.

ACTION TAKEN: With all in favor, the motion passed.

5. Establish Commission Protocols

Chair Anita Yap suggested that interested members work together before the next meeting to brainstorm a list of Commission rules and protocols, to be considered by members at the next meeting. Chair Yap, Mr. Steve Weiss, Mr. Justin Delaney, Ms. Sue Dicile, and Ms. Tricia Knoll volunteered to form such a Committee together.

City Attorney Ms. Linly Rees reminded members that any written correspondence between Commission members—when related to Commission business—is part of the public record. Furthermore, public notice is required each time a quorum meets. Commission members made the decision to copy Milena Hermansky, staff person to the Commission, on all emails.

Other Commission discussion and decisions included:

- Rules of quorum: Half-plus-one members (11) must be present for discussion; and three-quarters (15) members must agree to send an item to the election ballot;
- The Portland Plan: 30-45 minutes should be set aside at the next Charter Commission meeting for an informational presentation.
- Location of future meetings: should location stay consistent or move each month to different neighborhoods?

6. History and Vision of Ongoing Charter Review

Former Portland Mayor Tom Potter and Mr. Bob Ball, a member of the first Charter Commission, led the successful campaign to pass Measure 26-98, which created the 2011 Charter Commission:

Mayor Potter explained that when he was in office, it occurred to him that there were not regular, periodic reviews of the City Charter. The City and its residents have changed a lot since the charter was written in 1861. Mayor Potter felt that review of the charter was an excellent forum for community engagement. The Commission is comprised of twenty members who represent the diversity of the city. An item can be sent to the ballot if fifteen Commission members agree. The Charter Commission is an opportunity for citizens to get their hands directly on the levers of power. Everything we do is impacted by the City Charter. Mayor Potter encouraged members to listen to their neighbors to learn about issues facing the daily lives of Portland citizens. The range of issues is as large as our community.

Mr. Ball was a member of the previous Charter Commission. That Commission was restricted to looking at only four areas. One task was to establish an ongoing charter review process. Because the Commission saw many other issues they would have liked to consider, they decided that future commissions should have the purview to look at anything and everything they like. Mr. Ball strongly encourages members of the current Charter Commission to look at all aspects of the Charter, and to use their power to bring big ideas to the voters.

Mayor Potter and Mr. Ball then took questions from the Commission. Discussion included:

- If the Commission chooses to send items to the ballot, do they need to be bundled into one measure? (No)
- Did the previous Charter Commission hold any public meetings and/or forums? (Yes)
- How did the previous Commission conduct public outreach? (Social networking, emails to interest groups)
- The previous Commission had two years to conduct its business; this Commission only has six months and limited funding. Does Mr. Ball have advice on how to make the best use of time and money? (Mr. Ball suggested dividing into subcommittees to tackle specific issues. Mr. Ball also suggested prioritizing issues and deciding which can wait.)
- The current Charter Commission was created by Resolution. Is a Resolution legally binding? (Attorney Rees explained that no, a Resolution is not law. However, Commissioner Fritz stated that Council is very reluctant to put their name on something and not follow through. She and her colleagues on the Council are committed to appointing another Charter Commission and securing funding on an ongoing basis.)
- What is the connection between the Portland Plan and the Charter Commission? (The Portland Plan employs broad public outreach and covers a wide breadth of topics. The Commission can use the Plan to inform their decisions.)
- The Commission discussed maximizing members' various realms of expertise. Members can use their positions on other City committees and/or commissions as a forum to gather information.
- In Mayor Potter and Mr. Ball's opinions, what is the purpose of the two Charter Commissions? (The purpose of the Commissions is to amend "housekeeping" items, but also to look at more profound items, such as equity and education. Waiting two years on some of these issues is waiting two years too long.)

7. Public Testimony

Ms. Grace XXX appreciates the diversity among Charter Commission members, but the voice of youth is missing from the discussion. (Chair White explained that one member is in high school but is absent today).

Mr. Jason Wurster is excited to see a Charter Commission formed, and declared that the members sitting around the table are the most powerful Commissioners in Portland.

Mr. Kayse Jama admires and respects Commissioner Fritz, and feels strongly that the process is very important. Mr. Jama talked about the Portland Plan and its role in informing the Charter Commission.

8. Next Steps

To make the best use of limited time and resources, the Commission should break into subcommittees to focus on the following issues: The Portland Plan; Communication and Outreach; Development of a process to appoint future Commission members; Rules and Protocols; and an Executive Committee.

Additionally, Co-Chairs Mark White and Anita Yap will act as spokespeople should there be any media interest in the Charter Commission.

The next meeting will be held Thursday, February 17, 2011 from 6:00-8:00 pm in the Rose Room at City Hall.

The Commission adjourned at 8:07 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Milena B. Hermansky
Recording Secretary

ATTACHMENTS TO THE RECORD:

Resolution No. 36836: *Appoint members to the 2011 Charter Commission, convene Commission and request specific study and actions (Resolution)*

Memo to 2011 City of Portland Charter Commission from Bob Ball