



BURLINGTON CITY COUNCIL CHARTER CHANGE COMMITTEE

7/9/2015

Charter Change Committee Meeting

July 9, 2015

Room 10, City Hall

Committee Members: Councilor Kurt Wright, Chair (KW); Sara Giannoni (SG); Joan Shannon (JS)

Staff: Eileen Blackwood (EB)

Other Attendees: none

KW called the meeting to order at 4:17 pm.

1. **Agenda.** JS moved, SG seconded adoption of the agenda. Unanimous.
1. **Minutes of 12/3/14.** JS moved, SG seconded acceptance of the minutes. Unanimous.
1. **Public Forum.** None
1. **Discussion of possible issues for consideration**
 - 4.01 Potential charter changes from administration—

EB reviewed list of potential issues:

-Change requirement to provide record of expenditures to provide audit result

-Change distribution of audit

-Eliminate fence viewers. JS suggested maybe giving them new duties. KW suggested the topic be to eliminate or empower them.

-Change size of Parks and Police Commission to 7 for diversity goals. This was referred to committee by previous council and was on councilors' agenda. So, the councilors also desired this to move forward.

4.02 Potential changes from councilors—





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JS suggested she would like to implement bag tax. Her first thought was plastic bag ban, but spoke to a person who said that single use grocery bags, whether plastic or paper, are showing up around the lake. Their data shows the carrot (getting money back) doesn't work, but if you charge for the bag, it changes behavior. SG would like to consider where the money goes. KW also said there is a need to consider how to implement this. This topic needs discussion first at the council before a decision to refer it to the committee. JS will come forward with a resolution asking the council to refer it to the committee, so this will not go on the list as a committee recommendation for inclusion in its work at this point.

SG suggested checking in with different commissions/boards about how they are functioning. Do they need more people, are they empowered enough? JS thinks the council has satisfied the issue of how boards are functioning, but in light of the council's decision to reduce role of its own committees, is there a role to facilitate conversations with commissions/departments? The idea of the commissions was to have community oversight of the departments, but how does this differ from the council's committees? What if this committee took on one commission and looked at the oversight overall and see if it's productive to review? Maybe DPW? The committee therefore will add this item to the list of topics to be referred to it. The focus would be on understanding the different roles of different oversight bodies and what they should be.

KW suggested a charter change that would establish a commission or board to oversee CEDO since we are now using general fund money for CEDO. This issue was raised 20 years ago, but because it is no longer completely grant-funded, public thoughts may have changed. JS suggested an information-gathering suggestion to explore what oversight there is. On second thought, she suggested that KW propose a resolution to refer the issue of the oversight of CEDO to this committee, similar to the issue of the bag tax above, rather than putting this on the list as a committee recommendation.

KW suggested consideration of the charter change provision about whether partial reappraisal should be revenue neutral like a full reappraisal. He thinks there should be a discussion of whether we need to make any change. JS feels this is worth council discussion before committee—that is, similar to the bag tax and the oversight by CEDO, KW should put forth a resolution asking the council to refer the issue to the committee; that way the council can have discussion and decide if there is enough support for the issue to be discussed.

This issue is not a charter change, but KW reported that there are folks in the New North End saying they are going to propose a ballot item or ask the council to put on the ballot an advisory question about whether the city should go forward with the North Avenue Bike Corridor pilot. The idea is the city would vote on whether or not to do the pilot, even though DPW has made clear that if after the pilot, the public doesn't want the corridor, it will not be built. JS said it's an interesting question, as she can think of other issues this could apply to. JS suggested there are some advantages to having the council deciding what question goes on the ballot, so maybe they should consider putting an advisory question forward. JS said she'd at least consider it. SG said she would consider it as well.

1. **Next Meetings**—KW will prepare a written report of the above discussion for the council's August meeting, and then the committee will try to meet again at 3 pm on Sept. 10.



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1. The meeting was adjourned at 5:04 pm.