



Charter Change Committee Meeting ***In-Person and Remote***, Thursday, June 30th, 2022, 5:00 pm 6/30/2022

CHARTER CHANGE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, June 30, 2022

Via Zoom

FINAL MINUTES (Updated 7/21/22)

Members Present: Councilor Bergman (Chair), Councilor Carpenter, Councilor Traverse

Staff Present: Tim Devlin (Assistant City Attorney), Thomas Musinski (Legal Assistant)

Others in Attendance: Gillian Nanton (Assistant Director, Community & Economic Development Office (CEDO)), Kristine Lott (Mayor of Winooski) Members of Public: Barbara Headrick

Meeting called to order at 5:00 PM.

1.0 Agenda

1.01 Motion to adopt/amend agenda

"Discussion of Legal Resident Voting" moved to 4.01.

"Discussion of Election Questions" moved to 4.02.

Motion by Councilor Bergman, Seconded by Councilor Traverse

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous.

2.0 Adopt Minutes from 6/15/2022

Motion by Councilor Bergman, Seconded by Councilor Traverse

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous.

3.0 Public Forum

No comments during the open public forum.

4.01 Discussion of Legal Resident Voting



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Comments from Mayor Lott:

- Special Committee:
 - Members were from community (also had some City officials be liaisons). Composed of people both for and against the initiative.
 - Advertised committee meetings.
- Outreach:
 - Began in 2018.
 - 6-8 months of community outreach (over a 1.5 year period)
 - Events included:
 - Committee Meetings
 - Info events
 - Listening sessions
 - Interpreters for New Americans
 - Canadians
 - Other methods of communicating informing to the public:
 - Sign up info sheets: at schools, library, etc.
 - Followed-up with people who spoke at meetings.
 - Materials were drafted with the goal of providing clarity to the public as to 'who can vote.'
 - Common questions received by the committee:
 - 'Do newly eligible voters need to take the voter's oath?'
 - 'What are the residency requirements?'
 - 'In the Citizenship process, there is a question posed regarding illegal voting; what is the effect of local voting on this process?' (Winooski's attorney worked with legal at US Govt. to find answers)
 - Councilor Bergman: Would Mayor Lott be able to provide a publically available legal opinion to the Committee?
 - Mayor Lott: Yes, will share with Sarah Montgomery.
- There are still questions regarding voting got Justices of the Peace.
- Implementation:
 - Needed separate ballots because had non-local items, too.
 - Needed a separate voter checklist, in addition to the State's checklist. There were concerns over voter privacy, but these lists are indeed public under Public Records Act.
 - In the 2020-2021 general election there was high turnout believed to be because of Winooski's outreach efforts.
 - Efforts to increase early voters were also made.
 - Resistance to this initiative:
 - Acknowledged differences of opinion on issue.
 - Had New Americans speake about the process and how difficult and long it can be for some
 - Educating potential new voters on the voting processes.
 - Worked with US Aide, schools, etc.
 - Held workshops offering explanations and review of sample ballots.
 - Polling places:
 - Winooski only has one polling places.
 - Costs: ~\$5,000
 - Namely for translation/interpretation.
 - Volunteers:



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- Mayor Lott indicated that she can reach out to past volunteers and ask if they want to share any information with the Charter Change Committee.
- Result:
 - About 30(?) new voters actually voted.
 - About 50 out of 600 possible qualifying new voters actually registered to vote.
- Issues:
 - Coordination of Checklists
 - Language:
 - Interpretation on that day
 - Translation of sample ballots
 - Legal/Law Suit:
 - Seems inevitable
 - Litigation costs
 - Arguments made by Winooski in Court:
 - 'State created law, not the city.'
 - 'School budgets are included in scope of voting.'

Community Engagement:

- Councilor Bergman: HavedDraft ready for a July 18th City Council Meeting. Get attention and get comments from Council, public, and press.
 - **Motion:** Putting back to City Council's July 18th Meeting for discussion (on the deliberative agenda) the draft resolution and charter change language (with supporting documents), with the action for City Council to discuss and about any issues or concerns. (Not for a vote by City Council to put on ballot; not first public reading). à Yes, consensus by Committee.
- Neighborhood Planning Assemblies (NPAs): Community Economic Development Office (CEDO) has an online form.
 - Can Staff sign up a single Committee member onto the agendas for the earliest available NPA meetings à Yes, consensus by Committee.
- To hold Community Meetings in fall.
 - Last day to have City Council propose a charter change?
 - Sarah Montgomery: ~December 13th.
 - Councilor Bergman: the 20th, but doing so would lead to administrative/practical matters.
 - Location? Centralized place like City Hall or elsewhere in the community?

"Segue item": Discussion of Attorney Devlin's 6/29/22 email to Councilor Bergman, which stated:



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"Hi Gene,

In addition to my last email just now, I want to note that in reviewing the Legal Resident Non-Citizen Voting charter change language, the Committee approved a section---specifically, §8a(d) which states "A legal resident voter who is not a citizen shall vote only in the City ward or district of which the individual is a resident at the time of voting"---that could potentially conflict with the Redistricting/Consolidation of Polling Places charter change if the Committee opts to remove the terms "ward" and "district." If this does develop into a conflict of language, I recommend that the Committee redress §8a(d) or recommend an on-the-spot amendment before the entire Council, perhaps using the term "election area" or something similar instead.

Thank you.

Best, Tim"

4.02 Discussion of Election Questions

4.02a - Discussion of Possible Voter Approved Redistricting Alternative

- The Committee reviewed the draft resolution prepared by the City Attorney's Office as it relates to passing redistricted maps for voting. The Committee agrees that voters should have an opportunity to weigh in on redistricting maps.
- The Committee made a few changes to the drafted resolution and will be opened to public input to ensure a broader scope of opinion is taken into account *prior* to being referred to City Council for discussion/vote.

4.02b - Discussion of Consolidation of Polling Places

- The committee discussed the City Attorney's Office's prepared memo regarding the legality of consolidating polling places with, and without, a charter change. Additionally, the resolution drafted by the City Attorney's Office to propose the charter change amongst the City Council was reviewed.

The committee members agreed on several substantive language changes, see below:



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Polling Places:

TITLE II. ELECTIONS AND CTY MEETINGS—CITY ELECTIONS

ARTICLE 4. QUALIFICATIONS OF VOTERS

§8. Person to vote in ward or City district on election area-specific candidates in which the person resides; residence requirement; locations of votes cast and tabulation

[Committee's Suggested Language]

1. "A legal voter may only vote on a ballot item concerning an election area-specific candidate if the legal voter resides in that specific election area at the time of casting that ballot."
2. Votes to be cast and tabulated in locations designated by CAO with the finally approval of such to be made by of CC.

The City Attorney's Office instructed to wordsmith this language based on direction from Committee in this meeting.

4.02c - Discussion of Multiple Choice Ballot Items

- The Committee reviewed the memo prepared by the City Attorney' Office is relates to putting multiple choice questions onto a ballot. The memo ultimately concludes that the questions must be presented in a 'yes'/'no' format.

Setting of next Meeting:

- Thursday, July 21. 5:30pm-7:30pm. Fully remote.

5.0 Adjournment

Motion to Adjourn by Councilor Carpenter, Seconded by Councilor Bergman

Final Resolution: Motion Passes

Yes: Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned at 6:58 PM.



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