

## ARTICLE X INITIATIVE, REFERENDUM AND RECALL

### **Section 10.01 Power of Initiative.**

The people of the City reserve the power to direct legislation by initiative and, in the exercise of such power, may propose any ordinance not in conflict with this charter or state law, except an ordinance appropriating money or authorizing the levy of taxes or an ordinance repealing an ordinance appropriating money or levying taxes. Any initiated ordinance may be submitted by a petition signed by registered voters of the city equal in number to at least twenty (20) percent of the number of registered voters residing in the city at the time of the last regular city election. A petition signature is invalid if the signer signed the petition earlier than the 180<sup>th</sup> day before the date the petition is filed.

(Sec. 10.01 amnd. by Ordinance 2016-19 adopted 8/16/16)

### **Section 10.02 Power of Referendum.**

The people of the City reserve the power to approve or reject at the polls any legislation enacted by the Council which is subject to the initiative process under this Charter. Within thirty (30) days after the final adoption or publication, whichever date is later, of any ordinance which is subject to referendum, a petition, signed by registered voters of the city equal in number to at least twenty (20) percent of the number of registered voters residing in the City at the time of the last regular City election, may be filed with the City Secretary requesting that any such ordinance be either repealed or submitted to a vote of the people. When such a petition has been certified as sufficient by the City Secretary, the ordinance so specified in the petition shall not go into effect, or further action thereunder shall be suspended if it shall have gone into effect, until and unless it is approved by the voters as herein provided. A petition signature is invalid if the signer signed the petition earlier than the 180<sup>th</sup> day before the date the petition is filed.

(Sec. 10.01 amnd. by Ordinance 2016-19 adopted 8/16/16)

### **Section 10.03 Form of Petition for Initiative and Referendum.**

All petition papers circulated for the purpose of an initiative or referendum shall be uniform in size and style. Initiative petition papers shall contain the full text of the proposed ordinance. The signatures to initiative and referendum petitions need not all be appended to one paper, but to each separate paper there shall be attached a statement of the circulator that he/she personally circulated the foregoing paper, that all the signatures appended thereto were made in his/her presence and that he/she believes them to be the genuine signatures of the persons whose names they purport to be. Each signer of any such petition shall sign his/her name in ink, shall indicate after his/her name his/her place of residence by street, street number and zip code, shall indicate his/her voter registration certificate number and shall record the date of signature.

### **Section 10.04 Filing, Examination and Certification of Petitions.**

All papers comprising a petition for initiative or referendum shall be assembled and filed with the City Secretary as one instrument. Within thirty (30) days after the petition is filed, the City Secretary shall determine whether each paper of the petition has a proper statement of the circulator and whether the petition has been signed by a sufficient number of qualified electors and shall hold any petition paper entirely invalid which does not have attached thereto the statement signed by the circulator thereof. The City Secretary shall certify the result of

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this examination to the Council at its next regular meeting. If the City Secretary shall certify that the petition is insufficient, the certificate shall specify the particulars in which it is defective and shall at once notify in writing the person filing the petition of this finding. A petition may be amended at any time within ten (10) days after a notice of insufficiency has been sent by the City Secretary, by filing a supplementary petition. In such event, the same procedures shall then be followed by the City Secretary and Council as in the case of the original petition for the same purpose.

### **Section 10.05 Council Consideration and Submission to Voters.**

When the Council receives an authorized initiative petition, certified by the City Secretary to be sufficient, the Council shall either (a) pass the initiated ordinance without amendment within twenty (20) days after the date of the certification to the Council; or (b) submit the initiated ordinance without amendment to a vote of the qualified voters of the City at a regular or special election to be held on a uniform election date of the state of Texas, but not less than ninety (90) days from the date that the City Secretary certifies the submission to the Council.

When the Council receives an authorized referendum petition, certified by the City Secretary to be sufficient, the Council shall reconsider the referred ordinance. If, upon such reconsideration, such ordinance is not repealed, it shall be submitted to the voters of the City at a regular or special election to be held on a uniform election date of the state of Texas, but not less than ninety (90) days from the date that the City Secretary certifies the submission to the Council.

Special elections on initiated or referred ordinances shall not be held more frequently than once each six (6) months, and no ordinance on the same subject as an initiated ordinance which has been defeated at any election may be initiated by the voters within two (2) years from the date of such election.

### **Section 10.06 Ballot Form and Results of Election.**

Ordinances submitted to the electors in accordance with the initiative and referendum provisions of this Charter shall be submitted by ballot title which shall contain a clear, concise statement, without argument, of the substance of such ordinance. The ballot used shall have below the ballot title the following proposition, one above the other in the order indicated: "FOR THE ORDINANCE" and "AGAINST THE ORDINANCE." Any number of ordinances may be voted on at the same election and may be submitted on the same ballot.

If a majority of electors voting on a proposed initiated ordinance shall vote in favor thereof, it shall thereupon become an ordinance of the City. A referred ordinance which is not approved by a majority of the electors voting thereon shall thereupon be deemed repealed. If conflicting ordinances are approved by the electors at the same election, the one receiving the greatest number of affirmative votes shall prevail to the extent of such conflict.

### **Section 10.07 Power of Recall.**

The people of the City reserve the power to recall the Mayor or any other member of the Council and may exercise such power by filing with the City Secretary a petition, signed by qualified voters of the City equal in number to at least twenty-five (25) percent of the number of registered voters residing in the City at the time of the last regular municipal election of the City demanding the removal of the Mayor or other member of the Council. The petition shall be signed and verified in the manner required for an initiative petition, shall contain a general statement of the grounds upon which the removal is sought and one of the signers of each petition paper shall make an affidavit that the statements made therein are true.

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### **Section 10.08 Recall Election.**

All papers comprising a recall petition shall be assembled and filed with the City Secretary. Within thirty (30) days after the petition is filed, the City Secretary shall determine its sufficiency and, if found to be sufficient, shall certify this fact to the Council at its next regular meeting. If a recall petition is found to be insufficient, it may be amended within ten (10) days after notice of such insufficiency by the City Secretary, by filing a supplementary petition. In that event, the same procedures shall then be followed by the City Secretary and the Council as in the case of an original petition. The finding of insufficiency of a recall petition shall not prejudice the filing of a new petition for the same purpose.

The Council Member whose removal is sought by a recall petition may, within five (5) days after such petition has been certified and presented to the Council, request in writing that a public hearing be held to permit him/her to present facts pertinent to the charges specified in the petition. In this event, the Council shall order such public hearing to be held not less than five (5) days nor more than fifteen (15) days after receiving such request for a public hearing.

If the Council Member whose removal is sought does not resign, the Council shall order a recall election and fix a date for such election, the date of which shall not be less than ninety (90) days from the date the petition was submitted to the Council or from the date of the public hearing if one was held, whichever is later, or at the earliest date thereafter permitted by the state election code.

### **Section 10.09 Recall Ballot.**

Ballots used in recall elections shall read as follows: "SHALL (name of person or persons) BE REMOVED FROM THE CITY COUNCIL BY RECALL?" Below such question there shall be printed the following as to each person named:

"FOR THE REMOVAL OF (name of person.)"

"AGAINST THE REMOVAL OF (name of person.)"

### **Section 10.10 Results of a Recall Election.**

If a majority of the votes cast at a recall election shall be against removal of a Council Member named on the ballot, that member shall continue in office. If a majority of the votes cast at such election be for the removal of the Council Member named on the ballot, the Council shall immediately declare the office vacant and such vacancy shall be filled in accordance with the provisions of this Charter. A Council Member thus removed shall not be a candidate to succeed himself/herself in an election called to fill the vacancy created.

### **Section 10.11 Limitations on Recall.**

No recall petition shall be filed against the Mayor or any other Council Member within six (6) months after he/she first takes office, nor within six (6) months after an election for his/her recall, nor within six (6) months of the end of his/her term.

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## **Section 10.01 General Authority for Initiative, Citizen Referendum, and Recall.**

- (1) Initiative.** The registered voters of the city shall have power to propose ordinances to the council and, if the council fails to adopt an ordinance so proposed without any change in substance, to adopt or reject it at a city election, but such power shall not extend to the budget or capital program or any ordinance relating to appropriation of money, levy of taxes or salaries of city officers or employees.
- (2) Citizen Referendum.** The registered voters of the city shall have power to require reconsideration by the council of any adopted ordinance and, if the council fails to repeal an ordinance so reconsidered, to approve or reject it at a city election, but such power shall not extend to the budget or capital program or any emergency ordinance or ordinance relating to appropriation of money or levy of taxes or zoning.
- (3) Recall.** The registered voters of the city shall have power to recall elected officials of the city, but no recall petition shall be filed against any official within six months after the official takes office, nor, in case of a member subjected to a recall election and not removed, until at least six months after the election.

## **Section 10.02 Commencement of Proceeding; Petitioners' Committee; Affidavit**

Any five registered voters may commence initiative, citizen referendum, or recall proceedings by filing with the city secretary affidavit stating they will constitute the petitioners' committee and be responsible for circulating the petition and filing it in proper form, stating their names and addresses and specifying the address to which all notices to the committee are to be sent, and setting out in full the proposed initiative ordinance, citing the ordinance sought to be reconsidered, or stating the name and title of the officer sought to be recalled accompanied by a statement, not to exceed 200 words, of the reasons for the recall. Grounds for recall should relate to and affect the administration of the official's office and be of a substantial nature directly affecting the rights and interests of the public. Promptly after receipt of a recall petition, the city secretary shall serve, by certified mail, a copy of the affidavit on the elected officer sought to be recalled. Within 10 days of service of the affidavit, the elected officer sought to be recalled may file a statement with the city secretary, not to exceed 200 words, in response. Promptly after the affidavit of the petitioners' committee is filed, and the response, if any, of the elected official sought to be recalled is filed, the city secretary shall issue the appropriate petition blanks to the petitioners' committee.

Compliance with Texas Ethics Commission regarding Specific or General Purpose Committee filings shall be required. The city secretary shall provide reporting forms and dates of submittal as required.

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## Section 10.03 Petitions

- (1) **Number of Signatures.** Initiative and citizen referendum petitions must be signed by registered voters of the city equal in number to at least 20 percent of the total number of registered voters to vote at the last regular election. Recall petitions must be signed by registered voters of the city equal in number to at least 25 percent of the total number of registered voters residing in the city at the time of the last regular city election
- (2) **Form and Content.** The city secretary shall provide the petition format in compliance with Texas Election Code. Initiative and citizen referendum petitions shall contain or have attached thereto throughout their circulation the full text of the ordinance proposed or sought to be reconsidered. Recall petitions shall contain the name and title of the official sought to be recalled, the statement of grounds for the recall, and the response of the official sought to be recalled, if any. If no response was filed, the petition shall so state.

**Time for Filing Referendum and Recall Petitions.** Referendum petitions must be filed within 30 days after adoption by the council of the ordinance sought to be reconsidered. Recall petitions must be filed within **[40 to 160]** days of the filing of the petitioners' affidavit initiating the recall procedure.

## Section 10.04 Procedure after Filing

- (1) **Certificate of Clerk; Amendment.** Within thirty days after the petition is filed, the city secretary shall complete a certificate as to its sufficiency, specifying, if it is insufficient, the particulars wherein it is defective and shall promptly send a copy of the certificate to the petitioners' committee by registered mail. A petition certified insufficient for lack of the required number of valid signatures may be amended once if the petitioners' committee files a notice of intention to amend it with the clerk within two days after receiving the copy of his or her certificate and files a supplementary petition upon additional papers within ten days after receiving the copy of such certificate. Such supplementary petition shall comply with the requirements this Article, and within five days after it is filed the city secretary shall complete a certificate as to the sufficiency of the petition as amended and promptly send a copy of such certificate to the petitioners' committee by registered mail as in the case of an original petition. If a petition or amended petition is certified sufficient, or if a petition or amended petition is certified insufficient and the petitioners' committee does not elect to amend or request council review, within the time required, the city secretary shall promptly present the certificate to the council and the certificate shall then be a final determination as to the sufficiency of the petition.
- (2) **Council Review.** If a petition has been certified insufficient and the petitioners' committee does not file notice of intention to amend it or if an amended petition has been certified insufficient, the committee may, within two days after receiving the copy of such certificate, file a request that it be reviewed by the council. The council shall review the certificate at its next meeting following the filing of such request and approve or disapprove it, and the council's determination shall then be a final determination as to the sufficiency of the petition. A council member who is the subject of a recall petition shall not be eligible to act in the determination of sufficiency or insufficiency of the petition.

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**(3) Court Review; New Petition.** A final determination as to the sufficiency of a petition shall be subject to court review. A final determination of insufficiency, even if sustained upon court review, shall not prejudice the filing of a new petition for the same purpose.

### **Section 10.05 Referendum Petitions; Suspension of Effect of Ordinance**

When a referendum petition is filed with the city secretary, the ordinance sought to be reconsidered shall be suspended from taking effect. Such suspension shall terminate when:

- (i) There is a final determination of insufficiency of the petition, or
- (ii) The petitioners' committee withdraws the petition, or
- (iii) The council repeals the ordinance, or
- (iv) Thirty days have elapsed after a vote of the city on the ordinance.

### **Section 10.06 Action on Petitions**

**(1) Action by Council.** When an initiative or referendum petition has been finally determined sufficient, the council shall promptly consider the proposed initiative ordinance in the manner provided in this Article or reconsider the referred ordinance by voting its repeal. If the council fails to adopt a proposed initiative ordinance without any change in substance within sixty days or fails to repeal the referred ordinance within thirty days after the date the petition was finally determined sufficient, it shall submit the proposed or referred ordinance to the voters of the city. The council shall promptly order a recall election to occur within [30, 90, 120] days of the date the recall petition was finally determined sufficient.

**(2) Submission to Voters of Proposed or Referred Ordinances.** The vote of the city on a proposed or referred ordinance shall be held not less than 30 days and not later than one year from the date of the final council vote thereon. If no regular city election is to be held within the period prescribed in this subsection, the council shall provide for a special election; otherwise, the vote shall be held at the same time as such regular election, except that the council may in its discretion provide for a special election at an earlier date within the prescribed period. Copies of the proposed or referred ordinance shall be made available at the polls.

**(3) Withdrawal of Petitions.** An initiative, referendum, or recall petition may be withdrawn at any time prior to the fifteenth day preceding the day scheduled for a vote of the city by filing with the city secretary a request for withdrawal signed by at least two-thirds of the petitioners' committee. Upon the filing of such request the petition shall have no further force or effect, and all proceedings thereon shall be terminated.

### **Section 10.07 Results of Election**

**(1) Initiative.** If a majority of the registered voters voting on a proposed initiative ordinance vote in its favor, it shall be considered adopted upon certification of the election results and shall be treated in all respects in the same manner as ordinances of the same kind adopted by the council. If conflicting ordinances are approved at the same election, the one receiving the greatest number of affirmative votes shall prevail to the extent of such conflict.

**(2) Referendum.** If a majority of the registered voters voting on a referred ordinance vote against

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it, it shall be considered repealed upon certification of the election results.

**3. Recall.** Ballots used at recall elections shall read: —

"SHALL (name of person or persons) BE REMOVED FROM THE CITY COUNCIL BY RECALL?" Below such question there shall be printed the following as to each person named:

"FOR THE REMOVAL OF (name of person.)"

"AGAINST THE REMOVAL OF (name of person.)"

A Council Member thus removed shall not be a candidate to succeed himself/herself in an election called to fill the vacancy created.