

MINUTES OF THE CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

CHARTER COMMISSION

July 19, 2018

7:00 P.M.

CITY HALL-CONFERENCE ROOM #1

Call to Order

President Steve Smith called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Roll Call/Status of Membership

Members present: Steve Smith, Matt Abel, Kathy Ahlers, Ramona Anderson, Gregory Sloat, Frost Simula, Carolyn Laine, Susan Wiseman, KT Jacobs, and Patrick McVary.

Members absent (excused): Frost Simula, Bill Hugo, Tom Kaiser, and Rob Fiorendino

Members absent (unexcused): Mike Patiuk

Also in attendance: City Attorney Jim Hoeft, Council Liaison Connie Buesgens, and City Clerk/Recording Secretary Katie Bruno

Approval of Agenda

Motion by Commissioner Abel, seconded by Commissioner Wiseman to approve the agenda as presented.

Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Wiseman, seconded by Commissioner Abel to approve the minutes from the April 19, 2018 meeting. Motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence

Katie Bruno, City Clerk and President Steve Smith reported they received a request from Jeanne Massey to provide a presentation regarding rank choice voting at tonight's meeting. Bruno indicated that because the request was not received prior to the posting of the agenda, the request cannot be discussed during this meeting.

Old Business

A. Discussion of Council Appointment Process.

President Smith distributed a summarized schedule of the current appointment process for a vacant council seat. Commissioner Laine contacted the City of Richfield, and reported that they hold a Special Election to fill a vacancy on the council, if there are more than 180 days remaining in the term.

President Smith clarified that any proposed changes to the current charter, would not take effect for the 2018 election. Smith then asked the commission for feedback regarding the vacancy process.

Commissioner Ahlers asked if the number of council members could be increased, noting that filling a vacancy may not be as urgent. President Smith indicated that a Special Election would be less costly. Commissioner Laine suggested the council process could be shortened. Commissioner Ahlers asked Councilmember Buesgens if the council had adequate time to review the applicants in 2016. Buesgens indicated that in her opinion the process was drawn out.

Commissioner Laine shared information from Commissioner Simula, suggesting utilizing rank choice voting, for the appointment process.

President Smith asked the commission to consider if this is something that needs to be addressed, or if our current procedure is adequate. Commissioners Laine and Schluender suggested a Special Election option be considered. Commissioner Abel stated his opinion that the current procedure works, noting in 2016 there were a high number of qualified candidates. Laine indicated that the appointment process gives the council the decision of something that should be made by the voters.

President Smith summarized that the following considerations will be discussed at the October meeting:

- Looking at the process followed by other cities; specifically Richfield.
 - How is it structured?
 - Have they utilized the process?
- What section of the Charter would be affected?
- The incorporation of rank choice voting, if a Special Election is held. President Smith stated rank choice voting could be considered as an option for a Special Election, to learn more about it.

Commissioner Jacobs requested that cities used in comparisons be of similar size.

Motion by Commissioner Abel, seconded by Commissioner Sloat to adjourn. All Ayes, Motion carried.
Meeting adjourned at 7:36 p.m.

Respectively Submitted,

Katie Bruno, City Clerk/Recording Secretary