



CITY COUNCIL MEETING

AGENDA SECTION	PUBLIC HEARING
MEETING DATE	FEBRUARY 9, 2026

ITEM:	First Reading of Ordinance 1723, Amending the Columbia Heights City Charter Regarding Recall Petitions.		
<i>Presenting Item:</i> Aaron Chirpich, City Manager			
DEPARTMENT:	BY/DATE: Sara Ion / February 4, 2026		
CORE CITY STRATEGIES: <i>(please indicate areas that apply by adding an "X" in front of the selected text below)</i>			
_ Community that Grows with Purpose and Equity		X Engaged, Effective and Forward-Thinking	
_ High Quality Public Spaces		_ Resilient and Prosperous Economy	
_ Safe, Accessible and Built for Everyone		_ Inclusive and Connected Community	

BACKGROUND

At the October 16, 2025 Columbia Heights City Charter Commission Meeting the commission held a second reading of the changes proposed to the City Charter regarding recall elections and related areas. During this meeting the following summary of actions was approved unanimously with all members present.

SUMMARY:

- 1) Dates and timing for elections were changed in three sections to reflect state statues by stating: **“at the soonest date that conforms with state law.”** (Sections 41, 44, and 50)
(first hearing on January 16, 2025)
- 2) A new paragraph was added to state the right of recall and to define the words “malfeasance” and “nonfeasance.” **“Right of Recall. The people of the City of Columbia Heights hereby reserve to themselves the right and power to remove from office at any time any or all of the elected officers of the City for malfeasance or nonfeasance in office in accordance with state law. For this purpose, the word ‘malfeasance’ means the performance of an act in their official capacity that is unlawful or wrongful, and the word ‘nonfeasance’ means the failure to act where there was a duty to act. The exercise of this power shall be designated as “the recall.”** (Section 47)
(first hearing on October 17, 2024)
- 3) Verifying petition signatures was clarified by adding **“Signatures must be from eligible voters who are on active status on the Statewide Voter Registration System at the time of the petition verification.”** (Section 48)
(first hearing on January 16, 2025)

- 4) The description of the Recall Ballot was stripped of all words for simultaneously electing a replacement; this has been rendered difficult due to complicating factors: our requirements for primary elections, and state laws requiring write-in ballots that conceivably could negate the voters' intention. Instead, if the voters recall the official, "**a vacancy shall be declared and shall be filled as set out in Section 9 of this charter,**" which is by council appointment if under two years remain in the term. (Section 52)
(first hearing on July 17, 2025)
- 5) The previous change also required removing the last sentence in Section 9 - Filling a Vacancy, because it references a process that no longer exists. (Section 9)
(first hearing on July 17, 2025)

SUMMARY OF CURRENT STATUS

The public notice for this City Charter Amendment Hearing, Ordinance 1723, was published to the Columbia Heights Website and also printed in The Life News Paper.

RECOMMENDED MOTION(S):

MOTION: Move to close the public hearing and waive the reading of Ordinance 1723, there being ample copies available to the public.

MOTION: Move to set the second reading of Ordinance No. 1723, being an ordinance amending the City Charter of Columbia Heights, for February 23, 2026 at approximately 6:00p.m.

ATTACHMENT(S)

Summary of Charter Commission Changes
Ordinance 1723