

Root Causes

Jeffrey <jeffreyfl@gmail.com>

Wed 3/9/2022 10:14 AM

To: Doug hillman <dchillman@aol.com>; Natasha Moore <nmoore@highlandbeach.us>; Peggy Gossett-Seidman <pseidman@highlandbeach.us>; Evalyn David <edavid@highlandbeach.us>; John Shoemaker <jshoemaker@highlandbeach.us>

Cc: Marshall Labadie <mlabadie@highlandbeach.us>

Mayor, Vice Mayor, Commissioners,

This Commission should address the root causes of the March 2022 Referendum Debacle. Let's not repeat our mistakes.

Our Commission kicked off this referendum with the lack of charter rules on selecting a Charter Review Committee. The Charter Review Committee wound up being a tool of the Commission rather than an arm of the electors.

Then, there was the election to the Charter Review Committee of that Barry guy who was one of the architects of the \$45 million Referendum Fiasco. I believe Barry was picked to deliver what one or two Commissioners wanted. It is concerning that Barry has now been instrumental in two Referendum Fiascos.

Three out of the five referendum questions that our Commission's puppet charter review committee came up with had to do with empowering our Commission.

One question had to do with lessening the responsibility of the Commission.

Finally, one question I had to do with empowering the people. Did you notice that question #1 got almost 100% support? Perhaps a charter review committee that was an arm of the electors would've come up with more suggested charter revisions like question #1.

Next, there was the language used in the questions.

For example, Question # 2 was at best, poorly written, at worse, deceptive.

Did our Commission think that our electors would not demand to know how much 5% was in dollars? I know you were short of space, but really!

At some point, it will become clear what our Commission's overwhelming desire was to get question #2 passed. My guess is that we will be coming up short several million dollars for the startup of the fire department.

Lastly, there is the issue of the Commission's "educational campaign."

Our Commission mailed no less than seven individual letters to voters at US postal service postage rates. These letters were drafted by a paid outside advertising company.

This debacle cost the taxpayers about **\$100,000.00**.

Was it proper to spend \$100,000.00 on an attempt to "educate" the electors? Let's call it what it was; you waged an advertising campaign. I applaud our Commissioners who disagreed with this scheme. We need to change the 3 to 2 commission vote to pass certain items to a supermajority of 4 to 1.

Lastly, it was unprofessional for a couple of our Commissioners to speak poorly of one of our town's leading Citizens, John Ross. This Commission should give John a Good Citizenship Award for his unwavering support of the residents of Highland Beach.

Jeffrey Kleiman
3907 South Ocean Blvd.