

The Charter Commission Public Hearing Thursday, July 16, 2009

The Charter Commission is interested in your comments! Our focus this evening is primarily on learning what problems you think need to be solved through changes in the Charter and what issues you think the Charter Commission should work on. You are welcome, however, to comment on any aspect of the Commission's work or process. You may speak at the microphone and/or use this worksheet to write your ideas and turn them in at the end of the meeting.

Thank you for coming and being interested in your city's governance.

I. Worksheet on Problems to Solve and Issues to Address

As part of the Charter Review Commission's meeting on July 2, 2009, the Commissioners brainstormed their own individual ideas on the problems that the charter change process could try to solve and issues the Commission should look at. The result is a preliminary list that does not reflect an agreement of the Commission, simply individual ideas.

What items do you agree with? *You can check them on the lists.*

What items do you not agree with? *You can put an X by them.*

What items would you add to the list? *You can add them at the end of each list.*

What other comments would you like to add? *You can add them at the end of the sheets.*

Turn this work sheet in at the end of the meeting so that we will know what is important to you.

The following are problems that individual Commissioners think need to be dealt with and solved through this Charter process. Do you agree or disagree?

Leadership and vision:

- Lack of a clear city vision
- Lack of continuity of city governance
- Perceived lack of accountability both political and administrative
- Stalled projects and inaction and stalled planning; shared executive function or inappropriate division of executive function
- Systemic dilution of executive power
- Lack of authority to speak on behalf of the city
- Lack of regionally coherent action
- Responsiveness to external change

City School relationship:

- Perceived lack of control of the school budget
- Overlap of jurisdiction between the city and the schools
- School Board is an oversight body, but is elected which creates misunderstanding of expectation
- Need more coordination and collaboration between school system and the city government
- Ability to be efficient with resources

Engaging citizens and local elections:

- Significant portions of the population that are disengaged
- Does our system maximize access and engagement across populations
- Changing demographics
- Lack of a level playing field for people running for election city wide because of cost
- Perceptions of disparities between regions of the city
- Cultivating qualified candidates

Other problems:

- How the city does business with businesses
- Outdated and inconsistent provisions; housekeeping issues
- Governing system that encourages mediocrity
- Do we have a system that encourages and supports professionalism for staff

Your suggestions:

The following are issues that the individual Commissioners think should be considered as part of this process. Do you agree or disagree?

Leadership and vision:

- Look at roles of the executive functions of the Manager and the council; are those still appropriate? What should the division be?
- Elected mayor
- Length of term of office for the Mayor
- Rules for setting a city plan
- Term limits
- Whether powers of mayors should be increased and what are the checks and balances to compliment that

City School relationship:

- How we insure coordination and collaboration between the School system and City Government
- Different structures for selecting the School Committee
- Question of super majority to amend the school budget
- Ways to make city and school finances more efficient

Engaging citizens and local elections:

- Look at district size and number of districts and at large seats
- Clean election funding for citywide issues
- City wide election of district councilors
- Expanding voting rights to legal permanent residents
- Instant run off voting

Other issues:

- Should we review our current bonding parameters

Your suggestions:

II. Any additional comments or suggestions on the Commissions work and process.

Please turn in your worksheet at the door as you go. Thanks for your participation.

**Or send to: Portland Charter Commission, Room 211 Portland City Hall,
389 Congress Street, Portland, ME 04101**