

Commissioner Memorandum

TO: CHAIR FERRER AND THE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

FROM: Commissioner Christina Johnson,
Vice Chair

**SUBJECT: CONSIDERATIONS & REQUEST FOR
CLARIFICATION ON PROCESS FOR FINAL
PROPOSAL LANGUAGE**

DATE: November 11, 2021

Dear Chair Ferrer and Mr. Lawrence Grodeska (Civimakers Consultant Rep.),

Firstly, it has been a pleasure and honor to serve alongside my fellow San José residents in the review of our City Charter during such a pivotal moment in history. Our City Charter has not been reviewed by a resident-led commission since 1986; understandably both residents and Commissioners have identified what feels like a big backlog of various areas that could be updated to meet the contemporary needs of our community today. The practice of Commissions in our democracy is a tried and true process. “Throughout American history, Congress has found commissions to be useful entities in the legislative process. By establishing a commission, Congress can potentially provide a highly visible forum for important issues and assemble greater expertise than may be readily available within the legislature.¹” - [Congressional Research Services](#).

Change is not always easy or clear cut, especially in a large discourse format with 23 different lived experiences and perspectives. It is clear that there is lack of clarity in the process, particularly around what can and cannot be added to future agenda items. However, as we near the end of the Commission’s work, I would like to ensure that we end on the most positive note possible where everyone can feel heard, seen, and included. In the spirit of collaboration I would like to offer some thoughts, suggestions and a few questions I feel would provide clarity both for myself, my fellow commissioners, and residents.

Could you please address the following questions/comments for this final week’s process, per our work plan:

1. Monday, November 15th are final proposal discussions for just PMLAI (Policing, Municipal Law, Accountability, and Inclusion Subcommittee) or others as well?
 - a. If there are further changes from discussions during the meeting, when would Commissioners need to submit final comments by?
 - b. Additionally, if applicable, when should residents aim to submit their letters by?
2. Thursday, November 18th is final voting
 - a. What happens after the 18th i.e. will the City Attorney’s Office finalize the language?
 - b. Will the Subcommittee Leads be able to review the final language of proposals before it heads to Council? Could we ensure some sort of review capabilities if one is not included, this isn’t to make any last minute changes but to ensure alignment only?
 - c. Will there be a presentation to Council of the Commission’s work or will they only be reading the final reports/proposals?
 - i. If yes, who will be presenting and will other Commissioner’s (if any) be included?
3. City Attorney Mark Vanni, mentioned in a previous public meeting about the Council process, which would include public hearings, an update of the process with whatever available information we have would provide further clarity to both myself and residents that have been following the commission’s work.

Thank you,
Commissioner Christina Johnson, Vice Chair

¹ Congressional Research Services [<https://www.everycrsreport.com/>]