



Charter Review Commission

City of San José

Public Hearing MINUTES

<https://sanjoseca.zoom.us/j/94141759036>

6:00 PM

Thursday, July 29, 2021

Present: Chair- Frederick Ferrer; Members- Christina Johnson, Elly Matsumura (6:25 p.m.), Frank Maitski, Garrick Percival, Huy Tran, Jeremy Barousse, Jose Posadas, Lan Diep, Louis Barocio (7:17 p.m.), Magnolia Segol, Sammy Robledo, Thi Tran, Veronica Amador, Yong Zhao

Absent: Barbara Marshman, Elizabeth Monley, Enrico Callender, George Sanchez, Linda LeZotte, Maria Fuentes, Sherry Segura

Staff: Lawrence Grodeska, Consultant; Megan Roche, Legislative Secretary; Toni J. Taber, City Clerk; Mark Vanni, Senior Deputy City Attorney

I. Call to Order & Orders of the Day

The meeting was called to order at 6:03 p.m.

II. Public Hearing

The Voting and Elections subcommittee presented an overview of their four draft recommendations.

Public Comment:

1. Paul Soto urged that the history of redlining in San José must inform the decision-making of the Charter Review Commission, and also wished for more time to speak on each recommendation.
2. Roma Dawson strongly supported the moving of mayoral elections to the presidential cycle.
3. Brenda Dohmen preferred to keep the mayoral election timing as it is now, to not adopt ranked choice voting, and to not increase the number of Council districts, but did support the elevation of the Board of Fair Campaign and Political Practices (BFCPP).
4. Sandra opposed both shifting the mayoral election and implementing ranked choice voting due to insufficiencies in research.
5. Tony Romero, Community Organizer for Latinos United for a New America (LUNA), supported draft recommendation #1 to shift the mayoral election to presidential years due to the expected higher voter turnout.
6. Rebecca Gallardo spoke in support of ranked choice voting because it would make it easier for underrepresented minorities to elect their preferred candidate, and also suggested the resource www.fairvote.org.

7. Mariana Damian supported moving the mayoral election to the presidential cycle and elevating the BFCPP, did not support increasing the number of Council districts, and highlighted concerns over the installation of Verizon 5G towers in District 1.
8. Blair Beekman supported moving the mayoral election to presidential years and elevating the BFCPP, and also highlighted the need to prepare for upcoming natural disasters through decision-making in the Charter Review process.
9. Krista De La Torre, on behalf of the South Bay Labor Council, supported the fair elections initiative (draft recommendation #1) because of the expected higher voter turnout that is more representative of the diversity in San José.
10. Brenda Zendejas supported moving the mayoral election to presidential years, adopting ranked choice voting, expanding the number of City Council districts, and elevating the BFCPP.
11. Steve Chessin, Co-President of Californians for Electoral Reform, voiced support for the adoption of ranked choice voting and offered help to develop conducive language for the proposal to minimize costs.
12. Juan Estrada spoke in favor of moving the mayoral election to presidential years, ranked choice voting, and also encouraged the public comment of fellow community members.
13. Maria Marcelo, Community Director for Healing Grove, favored moving the election to the presidential cycle and encouraged the Commission to conduct outreach to the entire San José community.
14. Gabriel Manrique, Community Organizer for LUNA, supported moving the mayoral election to presidential years because it will produce increased and more representative voter turnout.
15. Michele Mashburn spoke in support of ranked choice voting, publicly funding elections, and expanding the size of the City Council, and also called the Commission to increase the accessibility of their meetings and meeting materials to ensure that individuals with disabilities have an equal opportunity to participate.
16. Kevin Ma, member of the South Bay Progressive Alliance, supported all draft recommendations and highlighted that increasing legitimacy should be the driving factor in making changes to the election system, rather than prioritizing costs.
17. Sam Gordon, volunteer for Californians for Electoral Reform, supported ranked choice voting for the predicted cost savings and the proportional representation it would allow San José to achieve.
18. Zakiya Cooper, Santa Clara University student and intern for the African American Community Service Agency, supported moving the mayoral election to the presidential cycle because it would increase voter turnout for people of color, encourage more engagement, and make it easier for residents to vote.
19. Roland proposed the adoption of two-tiered local governance, where each district would have its own mayor and council, and the district mayors would function similarly to district councilmembers.
20. Hiwad Haider, California Democratic Party Delegate and Steering Committee member with South Bay Progressive Alliance, spoke in favor of ranked choice voting, citing statistics detailing the majority of voters' preference for ranked

choice voting.

21. Jeffrey Buchanan, with Working Partnerships USA, voiced support for the proposal to move the mayoral election to presidential years and wished for the Commission to continue their efforts to increase voter engagement, while maintaining the nonpolitical nature of the Ethics Commission.
22. Ellina Yin spoke in favor of all draft recommendations, and also reminded the Commission that considerations of increasing accountability, representation, and inclusion should be paramount compared to potential limitations from costs.
23. Tami Sell spoke in opposition of moving the mayoral election to presidential years, ranked choice voting, and expanding the number of Council districts, but favored the elevation of the BFCPP.
24. Danny Garza, President of the Plata Arroyo Neighborhood Association, supported the elevation of the BFCPP and also expanding the number of Council districts.
25. Mayra Pelagio, Executive Director at LUNA, supported moving the mayoral election to the presidential cycle because it would increase voter participation, and also supported ranked choice voting.

VII. Public Comment/Open Forum

None.

IX. Adjournment

The Commission adjourned at 7:24 p.m.