



Charter Review Commission

City of San José

MINUTES

<https://sanjoseca.zoom.us/j/91220304185>

6:00 PM

Monday, February 8, 2021

Present: Chair- Frederick Ferrer; Members- Barbara Marshman, Christina Johnson, Dan Bozzuto, Elizabeth Monley, Elly Matsumura, Enrico Callender, Frank Maitiski, Garrick Percival, Jeremy Avila, Jeremy Barousse, José Posadas, Lan Diep, Linda Lezotte, Louis Barocio, Magnolia Segol, Sammy Robledo, Sherry Segura, Thi Tran, Veronica Amador, Yong Zhao

Absent: Maria Fuentes, Roshni Saxena (Resigned)

Staff: Lawrence Grodeska, Consultant; Megan Roche, Legislative Secretary; Toni J. Taber, City Clerk

I. Call to Order & Orders of the Days

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. Public Record- None

III. Consent Calendar

a) Approve Charter Review Commission Minutes.

Upon motion by Commissioner Barousse, seconded by Commissioner Tran, and carried unanimously, the Commission moved to adopt the Charter Review Commission minutes from meetings dated 1/11/2021 and 1/25/2021. (20-0-1)

IV. Reports & Information

a) Report from the Chair

Chair Ferrer clarified the general procedure that the Commission shall follow and the practice of responding to public comment by going through the Chair. The Commissioner Agreements will be placed on the next meeting's Consent Calendar for adoption.

b) Report from the Clerk

The City Clerk announced that Commissioner Saxena has resigned and that the Commission will soon look for a replacement.

c) Report from Consultant- None

V. Public Hearing- None

VI. Old Business

a) City Charter 101

The report on City Charters was received and filed.

Public Comment: Paul Soto spoke of the history of Charters in San José and asked for a representative from the Office of Racial Equity to be present in Charter Review Commission meetings. Ellina Yin had trouble locating the Commissioner Agreements within the documents posted online. Blair Beekman urged the Commission to consider how elected officials in the community can have more power rather than focusing on strong mayor governance.

VII. New Business

a) Civic Engagement

Mark Vanni, representative from the City Attorney's office, outlined the purpose and origin of the Charter Review Commission. In reference to Council policy 0-4, Vanni noted that the Commission may establish by-laws if it so chooses. In terms of communication within the Commission and with the public, he also outlined the Brown Act and Public Records Act to which the Commissioners are subject. Commissioners and the Chair asked questions and provided comment.

The City Clerk announced that broadcasting is now available and live for Charter Review Commission meetings. She discussed the capacity for interpretation at select strategic public meetings and translations for public outreach items due to both budget and time constraints. The City Clerk also outlined the capacity of the staff designated to the Commission and provided a website tour specific to the Charter Review Commission. A recorded website tour is also posted to the Clerk's YouTube channel, accessible through this link: <https://youtu.be/ImrrJ0v7cZc>. In addition, the Clerk noted the prospect of implementing new website software that would allow for increased public engagement with documents. She then responded to questions from the commissioners.

Guest speakers Camille Llanes-Fontanilla, Executive Director of SOMOS Mayfair, and Poncho Guevara, Executive Director of Sacred Heart Community Service, discussed best practices in terms of community engagement. Speaker Guevara urges commissioners to consider the proper use of power within the city governance model, through the lens of equity. He highlighted the importance of both ensuring that processes are widely accessible and also paying attention to the lived experiences of those affected. Speaker Llanes-Fontanilla recommends that the Commission focus clearly on a goal of how to

take public engagement and turn it into meaningful action. She added that creating a sense of belonging with the public and taking action that is accountable to the input they provide is paramount to building trust with the broader community. The speakers answered questions posed by the commissioners. Commissioners provided comment on what they would like to consider in terms of civic engagement.

Chair Ferrer and Consultant Grodeska asked for the input of the commissioners on potential study topics to add to the workplan draft.

Public Comment: Ellina Yin highlighted that the Charter is the most important legal document of any city, she called for the City Council to have more accountability to the decisions of the Charter Review Commission, and wanted the right to accessible civic education on a city level to be considered. Paul Soto asked the Commission to read “Starvation Under the Orange Trees” and “Dubious Battle in California” both written by John Steinbeck. Robert Brownstein asked the Commission to send an urgent memo to the City Council asking for the budget to provide translation services, he called for longer conversations with Commissioners that extend past one minute in length, and stated that while structure is a tool, the goals of the Commission are most essential. Blair Beekman recommended that applying a lens of reimagined equity will inform a possible study session on “strong mayor” systems and allow the community to share more space with government. Jeffrey Buchanan asked the Commission to reconceptualize the budget and ask for the resources that are needed.

VIII. Public Comment

1. Paul Soto agreed that consulting prior mayors would be beneficial and echoed that the works of Steinbeck he recommended would inform the Commission of how power and wealth accumulated in San José.
2. Blair Beekman discussed the importance of respecting ideas of accountability and suggested that the Commission turn to City government employees to help provide language interpretation.

IX. Meeting Schedule and Agenda Items

The next meeting is scheduled for March 8, 2021.

X. Adjournment

The Commission adjourned at 9:13 p.m.

× *Megan Roche*
Megan Roche(megan.roche@sanjoseca.gov) (3/30/2021)

Prepared by:
Megan Roche, Deputy City Clerk

× *Frederick J. Ferrer*
[REDACTED] (3/30/2021)

Frederick Ferrer
Chair, Charter Review Commission