

Charter Commission Public Hearing II
Gunning Recreation Center
June 24, 2008

Hearing Notes

Chairperson Phyllis Cleveland could the public hearing to order at 6:58 PM. Chairperson Cleveland went through the process of explaining the charter and the purpose for the public hearings. The Chairperson also wanted to hear what the citizens have to say about what they prefer to see revised in the city charter.

First question asked by the audience was centered on what is the charter? - Kevin Kelley explained the purpose of the charter to the audience.

Topic - Civil Service

Speaker 1

Why does the administration want to cut out civil service and eliminate skilled operators, which could run the risk of getting unskilled operators who are unqualified and this could pose a safety threat and this needs to be taken into consideration.

Speaker 2

Leave civil service alone, the required standards for meeting qualifications for positions should increase for employees.

Speaker 3.

Civil service testing should continue this is very important, and the safety forces should be civil service tested when applying for command staff positions.

Speaker 4 - fairness of working for the city and the application process for full-time and part-time employees and the fairness of that process in regards to accessing city jobs.

Speaker 5 - concern about the administrative proposals that are trying to eliminate the civil service, also what is in the charter right now is being ignored by the city and not

being followed. Raised another issue of the city having unqualified staff perform jobs that they have not been trained to do.

Speaker mentioned that reducing the size of Council can create an imbalance in city hall and could give the administration too much power which would not benefit city employees.

Speaker 6 - raised the question if there are the choices made in regards to civil service testing and do you get points for being veteran, or any other special consideration where points can be given. How the test is written and scored was also raised.

Council Rightsizing

Speaker 1 - unresponsive bureaucracy at city hall, which could care less on whether council is reduced or not. If things are broken at city hall someone should know about that and try to correct it. The Cleveland City Council should not be baby sitting the administration. Don't know why City Council should be looking into why citizens did not receive city services from the city departments that should be the supervisor's job.

Speaker 2 - City council should be concerned about citizens not receiving adequate city services, and if there is a reduction in city council, it will not benefit the citizens. Such a reduction will be corporate controlled and we need local representation we need city council to represent the people.

Speaker 3 - 2010 brings much respect in regards to how we redraw our legislative districts, and why are we bringing up reducing the size of city council since the redrawing of the boundaries won't take place until 2 years from now. How do we determine who will lose their jobs, and how will this be determined and by what process is this being decided? This does not make sense to reduce the size of council or the ability of the residents to voice their opinions on what is taking place in the city of Cleveland.

Speaker 4 - Council does much for the citizens, and should not be reduced. We need representation cannot afford to reduce it.

Speaker 5 - Don't know what the proposals for charter change are and the council reduction proposal makes no sense. If the council person has a larger constituency how could the constituent get in contact with that council member?

(Access to the council website for information on the commission was brought up and the fact that many people may not have access to the internet or cannot access it on the web.)

Speaker 6 - served on the charter commission 20 years ago and supports what the audience is saying. In regards to the charter review that is being done in 2008, the Charter Commission is many light years ahead of where they were 20 years ago.

Speaker 7 - The city residency issue was mentioned and thinks it is wrong for employees to live outside the city of Cleveland.

Speaker 8 - The present population in Bay Village is 16,000 and Pepper Pike has 6,000 residents, Rocky River has 25,000, and feels that the families who live in the city deserves much representation and believes that no suburban mayor should be trying to reduce the size of Cleveland City Council.

Speaker 9 - This is a suburbanite republican scheme to reduce the size of Cleveland City Council. There is an effort by the republicans to reform the county government and we should be able to beat this initiative. Jim Traficant and Mayor of Bay Village are also behind this plan. The Cuyahoga County reform plan is another republican driven initiative.

Speaker 10 - Baltimore has approximately 28,000 constituents per council member, Cleveland is a different city than it was years ago. Did the Commission research on what is being done in other cities in relation to the size of City Council? We need to look at reduction efforts that are taking or have taken place in other cities in regards to the size of Council.

Speaker 11 - Expressed the opinion that with the current energy crisis, people will be coming back to the city, and would like to see both the council and administration

follow the charter. Civil service must be strengthened and should be followed accordingly.

Speaker 12 - The charter review process should be changed but does not believe that it should be done every 6 years we need to keep it at every 20 years and must be very careful in making changes to it.

Speaker 13 - There is a budgetary issue in regards to council reduction, if we cannot afford to maintain our services then we may need to reduce the size of city council. We need to do what we can to keep our city competitive.

Speaker 14 - How do we let the public know that the charter review is going on, the public does not know, there needs to be something that is placed on the internet. There should be something put into the daily newspaper to let the people know what is going on with the charter review commission and proposed charter changes.

Getting information out through the Community Development Corporations is another means of disseminating information (someone mentioned about coming to the block clubs, and neighborhoods).

Speaker 15 - The number of flyers printed up for neighborhood was 2,000 for each ward.

Miscellaneous Items

The issue of boarded up homes and the problems they are causing for the community was mentioned.

Speaker 1 - Mentioned about sections 16, 17, 18 and 19 in the charter pertaining to the removal of a council member or mayor and recall petitions. Concern was raised that many people do not understand this procedure at all.

Speaker 2 - How are the proposals being prioritize and how many of them will be placed on the ballot?

Speaker 3 - Speaker raised a question regarding knowing the qualifications of persons performing official police duties. Citizens need to know who is legally and not legally a police officer.

Speaker 4 - Speaker mentioned if anyone thought whether or not making city council smaller will save the city money. This would be a big mistake for the residents in the city of Cleveland

Speaker 5 - The question was raised if there have been any proposals reviewed related to regionalism.

Speaker 6 - The topic of the City of Cleveland Airport Director was discussed and this speaker questioned if the director has any training in police and fire services to manage that operation and would like to know what his qualifications are.

Speaker 7 - labor and truck drivers operating equipment and people have gotten hurt already because of unqualified people.

Final question - Someone raised the question regarding the 6% raise that all council members received when 50% of the unions get their raise. Chairperson Cleveland mentioned that this is not true; the City Council receives what everyone else receives.

Chairperson Cleveland mentioned about the next public hearing, which will be held at the Harvard Community Service Center on Thursday, June 26th and mentioned that the deadline for receiving proposals from the public is July 15th.

Hearing was adjourned at 8:35 PM