

From: Bill Callahan  
To: Charter Commission members

Date: July 10, 2008

Attached are two proposals I would like to have considered by the Commission as part of any plan to reduce the number of City Council ward representatives from its current level.

The first ("Collaborative Government") is, with minor changes, the proposal for Neighborhood Service Districts which I made to the 1988 Charter Review Commission, and which resulted in Recommendation 13 of the Commission's final report to City Council.

The second ("Transparent Government") is a proposal to add language to the Charter to:

- require the Mayor to make all public records of departments and bodies within his jurisdiction available to the public on line by a date certain, and
- create a Public Records Review Board to review and authorize any administrative decision to withhold any such record from the public.

I've tried to make these proposals as detailed as possible, but the details are less important to me than the overall goal: **To offset any reduction in Cleveland citizens' personal access to Councilmanic representation with increases in:**

- Mandated **COLLABORATION** among the executive branch departments, the remaining ward Council members, and other neighborhood leaders in local planning, priority-setting and performance accountability; **and**
- Mandated **TRANSPARENCY** in the daily operation of City departments, boards and offices, using the technology tools now available (and widely used by other governments) for that purpose. (I'm excluding Council only because we've addressed Council's records in other sections.)

Thanks for considering these ideas. Please contact me at 216-870-4736 or <[bilcal@juno.com](mailto:bilcal@juno.com)> if you have comments or questions.

## **COLLABORATIVE GOVERNMENT: NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICE DISTRICTS**

### **§ 76-9 Neighborhood Development, Planning and Service Districts [NEW]**

(a) The Council shall establish, by ordinance, no fewer than one Neighborhood Development, Planning and Service District in the City for every three Council wards. Each district shall contain contiguous wards, provided however that one district may be limited to the boundaries of the downtown business district as defined by the Council.

(b) Each Neighborhood Development, Planning and Service District shall be represented by a district commission consisting of the members of Council representing the wards located in the district as *ex officio* members; an equal number of district residents elected to two-year terms in a district-wide, at-large race in a November election conducted in odd-numbered years; and a district resident or business proprietor representing each *bona fide* nonprofit community association located in the district selected by each association. Candidates for election to a district commission must file nominating petitions with the election authorities signed by 1% of the district's registered voters. *Bona fide* nonprofit community associations in a district shall be determined through standards established by ordinance of Council. Each district commission shall hold a regular monthly meeting at a location in the district, with notice of the place and time for the meetings provided to all district residents. Commission members shall serve without pay, provided however that Council may authorize the reimbursement of expenses incurred by commission members in the performance of their official duties up to a maximum amount per member per year as determined by the Council.

(c) The City departments that provide direct services, such as safety, community and economic development, recreation, utility, community relations, code enforcement and right-of-way services, to residents or businesses throughout the City shall prepare an annual service plan for each Neighborhood Development, Planning and Service District. Each annual service plan shall include an organizational table identifying the City employee or employees in each service department with direct authority and supervisory responsibility for the provision of services within each district. To the maximum feasible extent, each service department shall adopt an administrative structure consistent with, and responsive to, the Neighborhood Development, Planning and Service Districts. The Mayor shall submit the annual service plan to each district commission by no later than November 30<sup>th</sup> of each year. Each district commission shall conduct a public review and evaluation of the annual service plan, including conducting at least one public hearing in the district with the time and place of the hearing advertised in a newspaper of general circulation in the district. Based on this review and evaluation, each district commission shall submit written comments on the annual service plan to Council within 60 days of receipt of the annual service plan from the Mayor.

(d) In addition to the review and evaluation of annual service plans, each district commission shall monitor implementation of the plan and the general delivery of services by City departments in their district; receive and investigate

complaints or recommendations from district residents and businesses regarding City services; and recommend legislation or administrative policy measures to improve service by City departments to their district. The director of a City department, or a person designated by the director, shall attend each commission meeting at which his or her presence is requested by an authorized representative of the district commission at least seven days prior to the meeting date.

## **TRANSPARENT GOVERNMENT: E-ACCESS TO ALL PUBLIC RECORDS**

1) Any public record of the city, as defined by Ohio law, shall be made readily available to the public in electronic form as described below *unless*:

a) the release of such a record by the city would be contrary to Federal or state law; *or*

b) the withholding of such a record from the public is permitted by state law, and the Public Records Review Board created by section 2 has determined that there is a compelling public interest in withholding the record in question from the public.

2) A Public Records Review Board is created to review and approve any determination by any city officer or agency to withhold a public record based on section 1 b) above. Members of the PRRB must be city residents, not otherwise employed by the City, appointed in equal numbers by the Mayor, City Council, and the presiding judge of Municipal Court.

3) Beginning no later than *[date]*, the Mayor is required to cause all public records of city departments, offices, boards and agencies , including *[list Charter sections - City Council and Municipal Court excluded]*, to be made publicly available for examination or download at any time, at no charge, through a single computer network site (WWW site or the equivalent), administered by a new office created for this purpose.

Possible exceptions:

- Records more than \_ years old
- Records that cannot reasonably be converted into electronic format (e.g. counter ledgers)

Covered records should specifically include (among other things):

- Current names, titles and worksite contact information for all employees
- Civil service list
- Items submitted and being tracked in the 311 system
- Contracts, performance reports, payment histories
- Public RFPs and bids
- Board minutes and documents