



CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

Organizational Meeting Minutes

June 2, 2009

Lynwood Roberts Room

1st floor, City Hall

Attendance: Commissioners Wyman Duggan (Chair), Mary O'Brien (Vice Chair), Ed Austin, Martha Barrett, Jim Catlett, Bill Catlin, Teresa Eichner, Robert Flowers, Sr., Beverly Garvin, Mechelle Herrington, Ali Korman, Jeanne Miller, Gary Oliveras, Curtis Thompson, Geoffrey Youngblood

Cheryl Brown – Council Director; Jeff Clements, Rick Campbell - Council Research Division; Janice Billy – Council Auditor's Office; Rick Mullaney, Steve Rohan, Cindy Laquidara – Office of General Counsel; Carol Owens – Legislative Services Division; Steve Cassada – Council Staff Services; Jim Dickenson, Teala Milton, Nancy Kilgo – JEA; City Council Members John Crescimbeni and Richard Clark; Conrad Markle, Germon Vivas, Joe Andrews

The meeting was called to order at 3:08 p.m. by City Council President Ronnie Fussell who welcomed the group and introduced various members of the audience in attendance, then introduced General Counsel Rick Mullaney. Mr. Mullaney gave brief welcoming remarks, calling Jacksonville unique among Florida's 67 counties for its consolidated government which he believes to be the best local government in the state. He invited any interested commissioners to attend the Government in the Sunshine and Public Records Law training that his office will be providing to City Council employees this Friday from 9 a.m. to 12 noon in the meeting room of the Main Library.

Chief Deputy General Counsel Cindy Laquidara gave a brief overview of the City Charter and how it affects the operation of city government. She noted that the City Council is both a city council and the equivalent of a county commission under the charter, and that the charter provides for a strong mayor/council form of government for the city. She cautioned that the Constitutional officers and the independent authorities vary somewhat from their counterparts in other counties because of their placement in the City Charter, and vary among themselves within the Charter because of legislative acts over the years. It will be important to ask specific questions about and understand the specific context of each officer and authority when considering potential changes to the charter. She also noted that different parts of the charter can be amended in different ways, some by simple vote of the City Council while others require either a voter referendum or a special act of the Florida Legislature.

President Fussell stated that his charge to the commission would be a broad one that encourages a "macro level" look at the charter to check how things are working from the big picture perspective. How are all the various parts of the consolidated government (City government proper, Constitutional officers, independent authorities) interacting, and are the operations of all the elements running efficiently and effectively? He also encouraged the commission to hear from the general public and interested groups about what they think is worthy of examination. Mr. Fussell then introduced commission Chairman Wyman Duggan and Vice Chair Mary O'Brien.

Mr. Duggan thanked the President for the honor of being selected to chair the commission and declared that the commission would be diligent in transparent in its work and would act in the broad public interest. He highly recommended that the commissioners read the Richard Martin book *A Quiet Revolution: the Consolidation of Jacksonville-Duval County and the Dynamics of Urban Political*

Reform, copies of which were provided to all commissioners at their seats, for the historical overview it provides of the process of consolidation and the effects of the change over the years.

At the Chair's invitation, the commissioners all introduced themselves and briefly described their backgrounds.

Managing Deputy General Counsel Steve Rohan gave the commission a briefing on the Government in the Sunshine and Public Records laws, which have both constitutional and statutory bases in Florida. He cautioned the members against discussing commission business with one another in any forum other than a properly noticed meeting, held in a publicly accessible place, with minutes being taken. He noted that the commission staff will be responsible for reserving meeting rooms, properly noticing meetings, producing minutes, and maintaining all public records. In response to a question, he recommended that the commission and its committees utilize a simplified version of Robert's Rules of Order to govern their meetings and that a quorum be composed of at least a majority of the members of the body.

Mr. Duggan announced the first substantive meeting of the commission which will be a public hearing to gather input and ideas from the general public, to be held on Tuesday, June 30th from 4 to 6 p.m. in the City Council Chamber. It was also announced that the commission has an e-mail address for public input: CharterRevision@coj.net. Utilizing input from the public hearing and ideas gleaned from reading of the *Quiet Revolution* book and the City Charter, the commission will meet in mid-July after the City Council summer break to determine what topics will be explored. Commissioners were encouraged to develop lists of possible topics for consideration.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:16 p.m.

Jeff Clements, 630-1405
Posted 6.3.09
3:30 p.m.