Policy Development/Review Workshop - Call to order at 04:00 PM

A Discussion and possible action on a 2012 Charter Election and Charter Amendments -- Paul E. Brandenburg, City Manager and Bridget Chapman, Acting City Attorney

Mayor called the meeting to order at 4:03 P.M.

Brandenburg said the last Charter Election was held in 2003 and the work on that began in 2001. He spoke about the process that occurred prior to that Charter Election. He said, since that time, there have been talk of possible charter amendments but noted the City can not have a Charter Election more than every two years. He spoke about a meeting that was held in the past year and noted there was a motion made to move forward with studying the charter and for staff to bring a list of charter amendments to Council this month. He referred the Council to the list of proposed charter amendments provided to them in the packet. He started describing the items on the list for the City Council. He said legal and staff has looked over this list as well. Eason asked and Brandenburg said he would like to review the list and then have Council discuss the ones they are interested in. He continued to review the proposed charter amendments for the Council. He said the second attachment has a calendar of deadlines and dates to remember for a November 2012 Charter Election. He said, if Council wants to appoint a Charter Review Committee, they should have their review done by this summer.

Mayor referred to the first proposed amendment, Section 2.01, and asked if this is a suggestion or for Council's review. Brandenburg said this is just for a review of the issue. Mayor said this amendment would deal with the question of term limits. Eason said, currently, we do not have term limits. She said she does not support going forward with term limits for the City Council because each election serves as a term limits. She said she thinks the citizens are the ones who would be the body to determine term limits for any elected official. Hellmann said he likes term limits and noted it is good to allow more people to sit up here and do the job. Meigs said he does not have a strong feeling one way or other on this issue. He said voluntary term limits are probably a good idea. Berryman said she is not adverse to the idea of term limits. She noted it would be good to limit it to three terms instead of just two terms. She said nine years is more than enough for someone to serve on this board. She spoke about why she feels more than three terms would be detrimental and problematic. Jonrowe said in her experience,
Berryman asked and Brandenburg said the Council does not need to send this to a committee if they do not want to do so. Brandenburg noted, if Council sends anything to the committee, it needs to be a list and not just a review of the full Charter. Berryman said putting the amendments on the ballot is sending it to the citizens. Eason disagreed and said sending this to a citizen's committee will allow for outside citizens to have full review of the Charter before they go to the electorate. She said she does not think the Council will do a good enough job of researching all of the amendments. Meigs said he would like for a committee to look into particular issues such as if a Council member has ever served more than three terms. Jonrowe said she would feel more comfortable giving this a lot more attention and research. Mayor asked if it is the intent of the Council to appoint a committee to review the charter amendments.

Motion by Meigs, second by Eason to pass these proposed items to a Charter Review Committee for further study and review.

Berryman said she disagrees with that. She said, at the beginning of this process, Council turned this over to staff to recommend items for proposed amendments. Berryman noted it is not like these amendments are a surprise because some of these items were amendments brought up in the past. She said these items have been vetted by staff and noted, if we send this to a citizens committee, it will be put to a group with an agenda or special interests. She said this should go to the voters and then let the voters decide. Gonzalez agreed with Berryman and said it would be a good idea for this to be put out to the greatest amount of citizen's possible for their vote. Gonzalez agreed and said this would eliminate the special interest. Jonrowe said one of the reasons Council members get elected is so Council can make some of these hard decisions for the public. She said part of our duty is to use our common sense to determine which issues need to move forward. She said she does not think it is outside the realm of duties to determine which items need more thought. She noted in Georgetown there are twenty-one boards and commissions, so it's obvious the Council values the public's opinion. Mayor asked and Chapman said the items on the Charter Election would be brought forward to Council as an Ordinance before being placed on the ballot. She said there is not a special public hearing required but noted people can speak to the item like any other item on the agenda. Meigs said he sees this list as just a starting point for the whole process. He said he takes exception to the comments made about the citizens bringing agendas to the table and that it might be a waste of time. He said the City Charter is worth the extra time and worth a citizens committee. Hellmann said he likes the idea of a committee but noted he is worried about the timing of using a citizen's committee for these amendments. Hellmann said he agrees with Jonrowe that Council will have the final vote on whether or not amendments go on the ballot. Mayor said Council is at liberty to give any charge they would like to the committee. Chapman said the amendment to the General Election moving the election to November must go forward in a Charter Election and noted the question is what should go along with that issue on the ballot with knowledge that we can only do this type of election every two years. There was much discussion about the deadlines. Mayor asked and Chapman confirmed it is necessary to set a deadline for the committee and noted the amendment list needs to be set by July. Eason said she is hearing this list is just suggestions from staff but noted there has still been no full research done on these items. Eason spoke about issues that need to be discussed more fully by the City Council such as putting the City Secretary and City Attorney under the direct reporting of the City Manager. Eason said there are some things in this list that need much more research by the Council at the very least and noted she always welcomes the help of a citizen's committee as well.

Meigs amended his motion to say the committee shall begin its work as soon as possible and finish by June 1, 2012. Brandenburg said, if the motion passes, the City Manager could have names for the committee by the second meeting in January. He noted this would allow the committee to begin work in February. Mayor asked if this would be a sufficient enough timeline for the Council. Chapman said she thinks that would be fine. Gonzalez said once the Council does have the recommendations, it could take some time to review them. He noted the Council is going to need enough time on the dais as well.
time for the committee. He said June is not enough time for the Council to review the recommendations prior to passing an Ordinance. **Eason agreed with the amendment.** Brandenburg said the key is for the committee to know that they are going to have to meet multiple times a month before in order to meet the June or July deadline. Berryman said she objects to that many meetings for the committee to attend. She said she thinks this needs to be at least a two year discussion. She spoke about how staff are the people who know the most about what needs to be changed. Berryman spoke about how the committee is going to open pandora's box. Berryman said it is not fair to expect a group to meet every week. Eason said the Council sets the charge and added they can control what is sent to the committee for review. Mayor said the issue may be resolved based upon how Council votes on this issue.

Hellmann asked if this schedule would give Council enough time to properly discuss this issue and word everything for the Ordinance. Brandenburg said Council can set special meetings as well as normal meetings in order to review this issue sufficiently. Hellmann said he thinks this is a sufficient time frame as long as Council can set the parameters. Eason said she would like confirmation that staff has fully reviewed each one of these items and then is recommending these as changes to the Charter. Brandenburg reviewed again the different suggestions and who came up with each of them. He said not all of the suggestions are from staff and noted there are about four or five of them that are major policy decisions that need to be made by Council and were brought up last year.

**Vote on the motion as amended: Approved 4-2 (Berryman, Gonzalez opposed) (Sattler absent)**

Mayor asked how the Council would like to go about appointing members to the committee.

**Motion** by Meigs, second by Jonrowe that the committee be composed of one appointee from each district as well as allowing staff to assist on recommended amendments they may have brought forward.

Mayor asked that each Council submit a member for the next meeting. Gonzalez said if the Council is to have a committee, it should have the members and the attorney with no staff involvement. Chapman suggested that the staff member who brought a particular item have access to the committee so that he or she can explain the rationale behind the change. Gonzalez said he has no problems with that. Meigs said he has a concern on where the committee will get answers if there is no staff person present to provide them. Brandenburg said, in the past, the City Attorney has served as liaison as well as a bridge between the committee and staff. Hellmann asked when Council is going to determine the final list that will go to the committee. Berryman said this is a priority because Council is on a timeline. Berryman added there is validity in allowing the staff member who brought an issue up be available to explain it to the committee. Eason said her suggestion is to move this whole list to the committee for further review.

**Jonrowe made a amendment** to specify that the mayor be able to appoint a member to the committee as well. **Meigs accepted this amendment.**

**Vote on the motion as amended: Approved 6-0 (Sattler absent)**

Mayor suggested there be a discussion at the next Workshop to confirm the list of items the Council wishes the committee to address. Brandenburg said this has been out there for several months. Chapman agreed and said this is the complete list from staff.

Meeting recessed to Executive Session under Sections 551.071, 551.072 and 551.074 of the Local Government Code -- 5:07 PM

Meeting returned to Open Session and adjourned -- 6:16 PM

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**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 06:16 PM.

Approved: __________________________ Attest: __________________________

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Mayor George Garver

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City Secretary Jessica Brettle