

City of Excelsior
CHARTER COMMISSION

Minutes

Wednesday, December 1, 2010

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bratland called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

CHARTER MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Lloyd Bratland, Bob Bolles, Susan Brokaw, Jennifer Caron, Lucille Crow, Mary Jo Fulkerson, Leigh Harrod, Janice Leafer, Judy Mueller, and Jeannie Thompson.

ALSO PRESENT: City Manager Kristi Luger.

ABSENT: Colleen Nuese-Marine

3. CORRECTIONS OR ADDITIONS TO AGENDA

Chair Bratland requested that Membership and Legality of Petition under Item 7. be moved to follow Public Comments. Commissioner Crowe made a motion to approve the Agenda as modified; Commissioner Leafer seconded the motion. Agenda, as modified, approved 10/0.

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES (November 10, 2010)

Commissioner Brokaw made the motion to approve the minutes. Commissioner Leafer seconded. Motion approved 10/0.

5. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Linda Putnam, 152 Third Street, addressed the Commission. (Attachment A)

Mary Jo Fulkerson, 278 West Lake Street, addressed the Commission. (Attachment B)

Agenda items moved:

Membership: New Charter Commission applications have not as yet been received. Chair Bratland to review.

Legality of Petition: Chair Bratland advised that the petition before the Commission is legal. There is nothing the Commission can do to stop it, therefore we will continue with due diligence on benchmark cities.

6. PROGRESS TO DATE

Discussions regarding various team procedures and what should proceed from this point. Establish procedures, visit the three cities, start with where Excelsior is, have discussions with Excelsior staff and understand so we have good questions to get information.

7. OLD BUSINESS

Review of Benchmarking Steps provided with agenda packet. Commissioner Brokaw made a motion to modify BENCHMARKING STEPS, Commissioner Mueller seconded the motion. Motion approved 10/0. (Attachment C - Revised BENCHMARKING STEPS)

8. NEW BUSINESS

None

9. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting with flip-chart review is scheduled for December 15, 2010, at 6:00 pm.

10. ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Harrod made the motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Leafer. Motion carried 10/0. Meeting adjourned at 7:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Jo Fulkerson
Secretary

Attachment A – December 1, 2010 Charter Commission Minutes

Statement read by Linda Putnam, 152 Third Street, Excelsior

To an outside observer, one would have to ask why the Charter Commission is considering this amendment. It seems to be putting the cart before the horse.

What problem or perceived problem generated this move? If it was the parking lot acquisition, that should be off the table. As a Planning Commissioner I've heard the complaining from Planning Commissioners and others that the City has spent supposedly some \$60,000 in parking studies over around 20 years, to no avail because no Council has had the political will to implement the decisions of the studies. Finally, after 2 more studies this past year this current Council has taken positive and courageous steps toward solving this contentious and ongoing parking issue. We are also getting a library.

I'm glad to see proactive problem solving here and not more kicking the can down the road for another Council to deal with.

So, if not that, then what data do you have that necessitates this move? What concerns has the City staff heard?

And, why fast track a concern or opinion that appears to have initially come from only one or two individuals in town: Mark Bowers and Lloyd? Without additional data and input from our citizens (not just the signatures on the petition), this could be considered only a personal concern by these two residents.

And why haven't you included data, information, and perspective from our professional staff: our City Treasurer and City Manager?

If the concern is that the Council is not transparent enough, perhaps a discussion would be in order as to how to facilitate that. Would it be more mailings (a cost), would it be an upgraded City web site, more use of the Internet, increased availability of Councilmembers, monthly public meetings at Maynard's, streaming Council meetings video in real time? Ideas here would be very much appreciated. As a Planning Commissioner, I've seen that people only show up at meetings when an issue affects them personally. We trust, to a large degree that our elected officials mean what they say when they say they are working for the good of our City and citizens. And I think we can agree with this, that they do and are dedicated to our wonderful community.

We don't want mob rule. People don't want to be at the voting booth every time the Council needs to raise revenues for needed projects. That is why we have an election every two years, so that people with differing viewpoints - hopefully not just single issues - can run for Council and Mayor.

And despite the naysayers, as I understand it, Excelsior is doing very well financially.

This looks like a heavy-handed attempt to control this and all future Councils. It is irresponsible. But, of course, Mark has every right to take his petition to an election, which of course will cost taxpayers several thousand dollars. But be advised there will be considerable push back and a lot of citizens will vote against this.

Attachment B – December 1, 2010 Charter Commission Minutes

MARY JO FULKERSON, 278 WEST LAKE STREET – PUBLIC COMMENTS

I am standing here, not to address this commission as a commission member or as a councilperson. I am standing here as a citizen and lifelong resident of Excelsior. Please forgive me if I read my statement. I don't like public speaking; it also helps me control my anger regarding the petition before you which most of you have eagerly adopted.

The petition, as I understand it, reflects a deep concern regarding the City of Excelsior's finances?"

Why then, with the deep and abiding concern expressed, why weren't you, Mr. Bowers and Mr. Bratland, at the in depth, detailed, exhaustive review of the 2011 City Budget on Monday evening? Where were the rest of you? You all received notice of this public hearing. With all the angst regarding the irresponsible out-of-control city spending, why was no one from this commission, or the 67 – 68 signatories present at the meeting?

November 4th, the citizens of Excelsior had a 3-way race for Mayor of this great city. Two of the candidates were very vocal and emphatic regarding cutting spending, no new parking, no parking studies. Only one candidate stuck to the facts and told the truth. You all know the election results – does that answer any of your concerns????

I have here copies of the presentation of the 2011 budget which I will distribute. This budget was thoroughly and thoughtfully examined. Many hard, critical choices were made for reduction in costs. The council is fully aware of the economic times and the hardships many of us are enduring. The council, through due diligence, was able to reduce the proposed 2011 levy amount from 5% to 2%. Hard, tough choices and sacrifices by staff.

I would appreciate it if each of you would review the budget data presented along with the attached summation of the city's excellent financial position. I hate to sound like Jack Nicholson – but some of you just can't handle the truth! The city is in excellent shape.

I am sorry to admit that this petition and subsequent actions on the part of an angry few, are a result of an email I sent to many citizens of Excelsior and was subsequently forwarded to others. Even though it was public knowledge (very public since it was in all newspapers, local and the StarTrib). I was opposed to the purchase of land for additional parking spaces. My position was public funds should not pay for additional parking. I wanted each of you to be informed of a decision (you should have been aware due to the publicity) due to be made at a council meeting and, if also opposed to

this purchase, express your concerns to the council. You did – **You Were Listened To** – and . . . the purchase, . . . as proposed, did not proceed. Sounds like a democracy to me! Right? If this does not exist now, why are we doing this petition if this is a moot point?

Why then is this commission taking the steps for *implementation of other cities’ Charters* without exploring the impacts and ramifications on the City of Excelsior?”

Why then, is there resistance to inviting the City’s professionals, the City Manager and City Finance Officer responsible for implementing the City’s budget to these public meetings?

Any questions? Thank you.

Attachment C - December 1, 2010 Charter Commission Minutes

BENCHMARKING STEPS

- STEP 1 December 1st Meeting.
(Work on worksheet to benchmark Charters)
- STEP 2 Complete worksheet.
(Additional meeting, if needed)
- STEP 3 Charter – prepare outline and questions and answers.
- STEP 4 Entire Commission meeting with staff. (Staff input)
- STEP 5 Develop benchmark cities questions and answers and interview process.
- STEP 6 Chair meets with Fridley, Moundsvew, and Lino Lakes (with up to 5 members)
- STEP 7 Charter Commission meets to discuss findings. (No action will be taken outside of Charter Commission meetings.) It is your responsibility to become educated for these discussions.