

2023 Charter Review Commission Report

Recommendations to City Council

Jackie Sommer, Chair

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Commission Members

- Jackie Sommer, Chair
- Tom Waters, Vice-Chair
- John Allinder
- Les Boatright
- Patrick Casey
- Carmen DeHart
- Bruce Frakes
- Nick Huff
- Kevin Lathrom
- Mark McDonald
- Terri Steele

By the numbers

- Met twice a month January through November 2023
- Nearly 600 person hours plus homework and prep
- Recommended version reduces from 60 to nearly 30 pages
- Resources:
 - Zack Walker, City Manager
 - Jeremy Cover, City Counselor
 - Lindsey Gallman, Secretary/Clerk for the Commission
 - National Civic League Model City Charter
 - Other local charters including Blue Springs, Lee's Summit, Kansas City
 - Mayor's Advisory Commission on Ethics Reform
 - Jackson County Election Board
 - Various Citizens
 - State Law

Other considerations not included in the formal Charter recommendations

- There are things that we discussed but felt they needed further review from the council. These were provided in a separate memorandum.

Public Engagement

- Added to Article 1 is a recommendation for public engagement.
Source: Model Charter

Council Districts/Number of Members

- No change formally recommended at this time but urge the council to consider in the future
- Speaks directly to population growth since 1960 and has the potential to improve public engagement opportunity

Language clarification throughout Charter

- Council and Mayor vacancies
- Department direction
- Personnel and Merit System
- Department Requirements
- Council Powers
- Rules of Procedures

City Management Analyst

- Changed to Internal Auditor
- Simplified duties and qualifications

Modernized records requirements

- Many of the print requirements are outdated
- Provided for current and future needs
- Allowing for city website to publish required information

Removed Criminal Charge Language

- Not enforceable
- Charging decisions are made by prosecutors

Rules to remove City Manager

- Will require a super majority of 5

Municipal Court

- Council has authority to transfer to Circuit Court
- Strict procedural requirements
- Removed outdated language

Ethics

- Require a Code of Ethics
- Require funding of Board of Ethics
- Allow for potential recommendations from Ethics Commission

Elections recommendations

- Remove Primary Elections
 - Based on recommendation from the Jackson County Election Board, review of other cities, cost to City and candidates
- Review district boundaries after census
- Removed outdated forms
- Changed order of ballot candidates back to random drawing
- Added tax delinquency to disqualification of candidates

Clarified Initiative, Referendum and Recall

- Referendum process will not affect existing contracts, budgets, taxes, zoning, salaries, etc
- Updated language

Utility Funds

- Restricted budgetary transfers and loans from utilities

Deleted most of Article 9

- Outdated list of businesses requiring licenses

Moved Article 10 Indebtedness, Bonds, Notes to Article 8 Financial Management

- Added a requirement for the Council to approve a financial policy
- Changed bond language to conform to state law

Public Improvement Section

- Eliminated mostly redundant and unnecessary language.
- Placed more control with the city council regarding contracts.
- Special taxes are restricted by state law.
- Many sections already directed by city ordinance and uniform code.

Planning and Zoning

- Removed most of this section with recommendations for inclusion in Code of Ordinances.
- Changed “Master Plan” to “Comprehensive Development Plan”

Franchises/Private Owned Utilities

- Legal counsel recommendations for simplification

Future Charter Review

- At least every 7 years
- Completed by 11-member commission

Legal boundary language

- Removed from Charter

Thank You



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