

## CITY OF APOPKA

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**Minutes of the Charter Review Committee Meeting held June 26, 2014, at 6:30 p.m., in the City of Apopka Council Chambers.**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Linda Laurendeau, Chair	Bill Spiegel, Member
Pastor Doug Bankson, Member	Tommy Harrison, Member
Brian Frugala, Member	Doug Gondera, Member
Jim Greene, Member	

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Arlen "Coz" Mizell, Member	Alexander Smith, Member
Vince Gray, Member	

**ALSO PRESENT:** Bill McLeod, Committee Attorney; Bea Franqui, Administrative Services Manager & Committee Liaison; and Janice G. Goebel, City Clerk & Committee Recorder

**PUBLIC PRESENT:** Vernon Brown, Ron Landon, and Barbara McLeod.

**PRESS PRESENT:** John Peery - The Apopka Chief

**CALL TO ORDER** - Chairperson Linda Laurendeau called the meeting to Order.

**DEVOTIONAL** – Pastor Doug Bankson gave the Invocation.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA** - The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was led by Chairperson Laurendeau.

**WELCOME** - Chairperson Laurendeau welcomed everyone to the meeting, and advised there were speaker cards available for anyone wishing to speak. She welcomed new member Doug Gondera.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING** – The minutes of the February 27, 2014 meeting was approved by consensus.

Self-introductions were provided at this time.

Chairperson Laurendeau gave a summary of the process to this point. She said the issues the committee was charged with were: (1) the number of seats (should we add more Commissioners); (2) term limits (presently have none), all Commissioners are elected and serve at large; and (3) districts (presently there are no districts).

She said the discussion regarding adding to the number of commissioners, it was a consensus of the committee that adding more Commissioners would add to more diversity. The committee by

a vote of seven "for" and two "against" chose to recommend the addition of two City Commissioners.

**DISCUSSION ON TERM LIMITS** - Members Gondera, Frugala, Bankson and Greene spoke in opposition to designating term limits, adding some of the following comments:

- Citizen involvement
- Election process determines the limit of the term
- The recent elections changed many citizens mind about term limits
- Voters familiar enough with the candidates and issues eliminate the need

Ron Landon, 1134 Dekleva Drive, spoke in support of term limits. His suggestion was perhaps 10 years limit, out of office for 2 years, and then can return again. He added that processes tend to get into a rut if not forced to change.

Chairperson Laurendeau said she is opposed but has been struggling with the issue. She made the comparison with the Florida Legislature, where a legislator is just getting started when it is time to end the term. Every eight years there is a whole new House of Representatives and Senate.

**MOTION was made by Mr. Greene, and seconded by Mr. Harrison, to recommend that there are not term limits in the City of Apopka.**

**PUBLIC INPUT** - Chairperson Laurendeau opened the meeting to public input.

Cline Walters, 222 N Central, said he personally felt adding 2 more seats would be good for Apopka allowing a broader, diverse representation. He suggested they prepare for growth and add the 2 commissioners as quickly as possible to get through this growth.

No one else wishing to speak at this time, Chairperson Laurendeau closed the public portion of the meeting.

**Motion carried unanimously, with Chairperson Laurendeau, and Members Bankson, Frugala, Greene, Spiegel, Harrison, and Gondera voting aye.**

### **DISCUSSION ON DISTRICTS**

Chairperson Laurendeau said if we were to decide on districts in Apopka, there are at times a contingent from one area or another that may want their own district. She stated it did not work that way, districts are drawn by the government, in this case, the City, and the districts must be balanced numerically and equitably. She declared if we decided we wanted districts, then we would have to determine how many districts we wanted in the City and we would then have to visit our Commissioners and how they would serve.

Mr. Greene stated he felt it was important that elected officials be responsible to all voters in the City. He added that the City of Apopka is still small enough that it is feasible for all citizens to vote on their representatives.

Mr. Harrison spoke of concerns regarding the State districting and redistricting. He stated districting may not provide any better leadership or opportunity for leadership than the at-large relationship. He felt the at-large elected/serving was appropriate for this community.

Mr. Gondera said if a subdivision was split with the districting, this could create more contention at meetings.

Mr. Greene said districting was a complex situation and should be done only if necessary. He stated in theory, the commissioners should be representing all citizens as a whole.

Mr. Spiegle said he has lived in many locations and the best experience has been in Apopka with responsiveness from each of our commissioners, and making this change could create a problem that doesn't exist.

Chairperson Laurendeau reviewed with the members other areas throughout the state that are either elected at-large, or divided by districts. She stated she felt it would pull our City apart and did not feel we were big enough for districts.

Chairperson Laurendeau opened the meeting to public input.

Ron Landon, 1134 Dekleva Drive, suggested the committee think back to the controversy over the landfill. He pointed out that Errol currently has two commissioners and in the past there have been three. He stated there was no representation from South Apopka. He stated if there were districts, whoever was representing South Apopka; the prospects of those kinds of issues would not occur. He agreed people should not be elected from a single district, but he felt they should be representative of a smaller subset of the whole.

Chairperson Laurendeau reminded everyone that South Apopka was unincorporated Orange County and not represented by the City of Apopka. She reiterated that districts must be balanced.

Mr. Greene pointed out that all of the Commissioners had to be receptive to the people and their feelings and this turned out. If, in fact, three of the Commissioners didn't depend on any of their votes, they may have cared a lot less.

Mr. Gondera declared it was a matter of education from our commission to the people as a whole and how they communicate. The people don't have one commissioner that they can go to, they have five. He reiterated it comes back to education and a responsibility of the citizens to know how their voice can be heard.

Pastor Bankson said he agrees with Mr. Gondera and the process in place does work. He stated that all who he had spoken would like to keep it open, without districts.

**MOTION was made by Mr. Gondera, and seconded by Pastor Bankson, that the City of Apopka continues the current practice that Commissioners serve at-large and not in districts. Motion carried unanimously, with Chairperson Laurendeau, and Members Bankson, Furgala, Greene, Spiegel, Harrison, and Gondera voting aye.**

Chairperson Laurendeau asked if there were any other matters the committee should send to council.

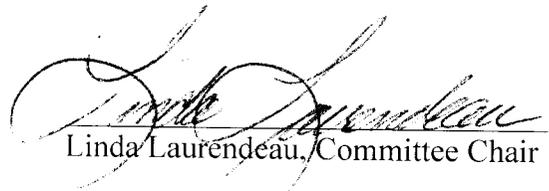
Mr. Harrison said the committee should suggest a full review of the Charter every so many years.

Chairperson Laurendeau affirmed that would be included in the report.

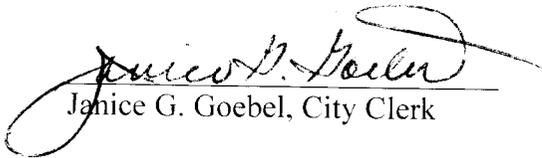
Chairperson Laurendeau concluded with thanking each member, Committee Attorney Bill McLeod, City Liaison Bea Franqui, and City Clerk/Recorder Janice Goebel, for serving in the process.

**ADJOURN** - The meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

ATTEST:



Linda Laurendeau, Committee Chair



Janice G. Goebel, City Clerk