

CITY OF COLUMBIA HEIGHTS

590 40th Avenue NE, Columbia Heights, MN 55421-3878 (763)706-3600 TDD (763) 706-3692
Visit our website at: www.ci.columbia-heights.mn.us

MAYOR
Gary L. Peterson
COUNCILMEMBERS
Bruce Nawrocki
Robert Williams
Donna Schmitt
John Murzyn, Jr.

NOTICE OF OFFICIAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that an official meeting is to be held in the City of Columbia Heights as follows:

MEETING OF THE CHARTER COMMISSION **THURSDAY, JANUARY 15, 2015** 7:00 P.M.

CITY HALL CONFERENCE ROOM 1 COLUMBIA HEIGHTS AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Introduction of New Member/Roll Call/Status of Membership
3. Approval of Tonight's Agenda
4. Approval of Charter Commission Minutes of October 16, 2014
5. Election of Officers
 - A. President
 - B. Vice President
 - C. Secretary
6. Correspondence
 - A. Correspondence since last meeting
7. Old Business
8. New Business
 - A. New Membership Lists
 - B. Approve the 2014 Charter Commission Annual Report
 - C. Annual Review of Charter Commission Purpose
 - D. Next Meeting Date: April 16, 2015 at 7 P.M., City Hall Conference Room 1
9. Adjournment

The City of Columbia Heights does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its services, programs, or activities. Upon request, accommodations will be provided to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all City of Columbia Heights' services, programs, and activities. Auxiliary aids for handicapped persons are available upon request when the request is made at least 96 hours in advance. Please call the Administrative Secretary at 763-706-3606, to make arrangements. (TDD/763-706-3692 for deaf or hearing impaired only)

**MEMBERS: IF YOU CANNOT ATTEND THIS MEETING,
PLEASE CALL CAROLE AT (763) 706-3606**

**MINUTES OF THE CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2014
7:00 P.M.
CITY HALL
CONFERENCE ROOM 1
COLUMBIA HEIGHTS**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Vice President Tim Utz.

Roll Call/Status of Membership

Members present: Ramona Anderson, Lee Bak, Jeff Diehm, Roger Johnson, Carolyn Laine, Mike Patiuk, Greg Sloat, Tim Utz, Catherine Vesley

Members absent and excused: Matt Abel, Steve Smith, Charles Tyler

Members unexcused: Rob Fiorendino, James Guy, Wes Wiggins

Council Liaison Tami Diehm was excused from tonight's meeting.

City Attorney Jim Hoeft and Recording Secretary Carole Blowers-Knoll were present.

Guest: Bryan Olson

It should be noted that two member's terms expire in December of 2014: Lee Bak and Tim Utz. There are two member's terms that expire in January of 2015: Jeff Diehm and Greg Sloat.

Approval of Tonight's Agenda

Motion made and seconded to approve tonight's agenda. Motion passed unanimously.

Approve Charter Commission Minutes of July 17, 2014

Motion by Commissioner Vesley, seconded by Commissioner Bak, to approve the July 17, 2014, minutes as presented by Secretary Matt Abel. Motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence Since Last Meeting

The Recording Secretary read the correspondence report since our last meeting:

- Sent the unapproved July minutes to the City Clerk for the City Council agenda.
- Contacted President Smith regarding the prepared October agenda, and sent it to all commission members along with minutes from July, 2014.
- Put tonight's agenda on local cable and posted it at City Hall
- E-mails were received from Commissioners Abel, Tyler, and Smith that they would not be able to attend tonight's meeting.
- Received e-mail from Commissioner Sloat regarding an item he wished to add to tonight's agenda; advised Vice President Utz and President Smith of the same.

Old Business

Commissioner Utz advised the Recording Secretary that he wishes to be reappointed when his term

expires in December. Later in the meeting, Commissioner Sloat also advised the Recording Secretary that he wishes to be reappointed when his term expires in January of 2015.

New Business

Commissioner Sloat wished to discuss some things regarding the referendum process wording in the City Charter. Regarding the recent petition on the new library, he stated that there were 300 signatures that were thrown out due to people who signed the petition, but had an address change within the city. He advised that he consulted with Cindy Reichart from Anoka County on this issue. Commissioner Laine stated that it is very easy for residents to change their addresses on-line and it takes just a few minutes to do so. Commissioner Sloat also suggested that we change the word "registered voter" to "eligible voter". Commissioner Laine advised that "registered voter" is the norm.

He also stated that the deadline and/or timeframe for obtaining signatures is not clearly stated in the City Charter. Commissioner Vesley stated that the timeframe was clearly stated by the City Attorney at the city council meeting when this issue came up.

Commissioner Sloat stated that there was also the situation of people who signed the petition and then later wanted to withdraw their signatures. The City Attorney stated that state statutes are silent about someone who wants to remove their name from a petition.

Commissioner Sloat stated there is a lot more detail in the City Charter regarding the "initiative process" than the "referendum process". The City Attorney explained that the referendum is more of a reactionary process, and the initiative is a "new" process; thus more wording for that process.

Commissioner Sloat feels some changes in the City Charter should be made to address some of these issues and clean up the language so that everyone knows what, when, and how to do this, and those proposed changes should come from the Charter Commission.

Questions/comments from commissioners present tonight ranged from:

- are these issues addressed in the state statutes (i.e., someone who wants to remove their name)?
- could we use the city's water billing addresses to verify signatures?
- the timeframe for gathering signatures was clearly stated by the City Attorney at a council meeting.

The City Attorney advised the City Charter gives us the power for referendum and initiative. There is a lot of latitude in the wording. The city's water billing addresses would not be a good way to verify signatures.

To clarify, Commissioner Diehm stated that from what he has heard tonight, Commissioner Sloat is stating that there are two issues:

1. Voter registration issue
2. Removal of signatures from the petition

Vice President Utz advised Commissioner Sloat to prepare his recommended changes to the City Charter in writing and forward it to the Recording Secretary so she can communicate it to all members before the next meeting in January. Then at the January meeting, we can have an intelligent discussion on the issues. If assistance is needed with the wording, the City Attorney can help with that.

Commissioner Johnson stated that he would like to get back to a review of the City Charter (in general). We left off at the "Franchise" section.

Next Meeting Date – January 15, 2015 at 7 p.m.

Vice President Utz asked if this date is good with everyone. It is always the third Thursday of the month (January, April, July, and October). As there were no comments, that is the date of our next meeting.

Adjournment

Motion by Commissioner Vesley to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carole J. Blowers-Knoll
Recording Secretary for the Charter Commission

CHARTER COMMISSION MEMBERS

The City Charter is the document which enabled the City of Columbia Heights to become a self-governing city under the municipal home rule provisions of the Constitution and Statutes of Minnesota. The Charter Commission is charged with keeping the charter current under procedures authorized by State Statutes. The Charter Commission must have not more than fifteen, and not less than seven members, which are appointed by the Chief Judge of Anoka County District Court. They are appointed for four year terms. Meet quarterly in Murzyn Hall at 7:00 p.m.

MEMBER'S NAME	MEMBER'S ADDRESS	TERM OF APPOINTMENT
ABEL, Matthew [REDACTED]	4608 Heights Drive Columbia Heights, MN	8-09 to 8-2017
ANDERSON, Ramona [REDACTED]	4132 Stinson Blvd., Columbia Heights, MN	5-13 to 6-2017
BAK, Lee [REDACTED]	1615 Innsbruck Parkway W. Columbia Heights, MN	12-10 to 12-2018
DIEHM, Jeffrey [REDACTED]	5125 St. Moritz Drive Columbia Heights, MN	1-11 to 1-2015
FIORENDINO, Rob [REDACTED]	3809 Jackson Street N.E. Columbia Heights, MN	10-12 to 10-2016
GUY, James R. [REDACTED]	2208 Forest Drive N.E. Columbia Heights, MN	3-13 to 3-2017
JOHNSON, Roger [REDACTED]	4626 Pierce St. N.E. Columbia Heights, MN	2-08 to 2-2016
LAINE, Carolyn [REDACTED]	1908 41 st Avenue N.E. Columbia Heights, MN	3-13 to 3-2017
PATIUK, Michael [REDACTED]	4437 Tyler Street N.E. Columbia Heights, MN	3-04 to 2-2016
PENNISTON, Eric [REDACTED]	1103 Gould Avenue N.E. Columbia Heights, MN	12-14 to 5-2018
SLOAT, Gregory [REDACTED]	4731 6 th St. N.E. Columbia Heights, MN	1-11 to 1-2015
SMITH, Stephen [REDACTED]	3813 Lincoln Street N.E. Columbia Heights, MN	10-11 to 10-2015
TYLER, Charles A. [REDACTED]	4004 2 nd Street N.E. Columbia Heights, MN	2-13 to 2-2017
UTZ, Tim [REDACTED]	4141 Stinson Blvd. Columbia Heights, MN	12-10 to 12-2018
WIGGINS, Weston [REDACTED]	4144 Madison St. Columbia Heights, MN	5-13 to 6-2017

City Liaison:

City Attorney, Jim Hoeft (Jhoeft@bgs.com)

Recording Secretary, Carole Blowers-Knoll (763) 706-3606 (Carole.Blowers@ci.columbia-heights.mn.us)

Revised 1/7/2015

**COLUMBIA HEIGHTS CHARTER COMMISSION
2014 ANNUAL REPORT**

MEMBERSHIP:

The following members served in 2014:

Matthew Abel	Ramona Anderson
Lee Bak	Jeff Diehm
Rob Fiorendino	James Guy
Roger Johnson	Carolyn Laine
Michael Patiuk	Stephen Smith
Greg Sloat	Charles Tyler
Tim Utz	Catherine Vesley
Weston Wiggins	

During 2014, one member resigned (Catherine Vesley). One new member was appointed at the end of 2014—Eric Penniston. At year end, two members were reappointed (Tim Utz and Lee Bak). One member whose term expires in January of 2015 (Greg Sloat) has requested reappointment for another four-year term. We are awaiting a response from the Chief Judge on this request. Another member whose term expires in January of 2015 (Jeff Diehm) has not advised the Recording Secretary of his intentions as of the time of preparation of this report. Membership is at its maximum (15 members) at year end.

Councilmember Tami Diehm again served as the Charter Commission Council Liaison for 2014.

OFFICERS:

The following members served as officers for the Charter Commission in 2014:

President:	Steve Smith
Vice President:	Tim Utz
Secretary:	Matt Abel

MEETINGS HELD:

The Charter Commission had four scheduled regular meetings in 2014. In 2014, the regular meeting dates were January 16, April 24, July 17, and October 16.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

In 2014, the Charter Commission discussed differences between a Charter and Statutory City. There were various questions in the last two meetings regarding the section on Referendum and Initiative (Chapter 5, Sections 44-46 and Chapter 7, Section 72) and if there should be any changes to that area. This is because the city ended up having a referendum question on the November election ballot regarding financing of a new library in the city.

In 2014, no charter changes from the Charter Commission were sent to the City Council for action, nor were there any other changes suggested from staff or citizens.

Respectfully submitted,

Carole J. Blowers-Knoll
Recording Secretary for the Columbia Heights Charter Commission

Agenda Discussion Points (6)

Regarding the City Charter

January 15, 2015

1A. The issue of non-voter Columbia Heights residents (who still pay taxes) being disenfranchised by "registered voter" requirement in order to sign a Referendum Petition.

1B. The issue of voters who ARE registered to vote and DO reside in Columbia Heights, but have moved (within Columbia Heights) since the last election and have not updated their residency per voter registration records.

2A. The issue of the timeframe and deadline for Referendum Petitions. WHEN does the "clock start ticking," and WHEN is the deadline? How do weekends, holidays, and other days that the City Offices may be closed influence the timeframe and/or deadline?

2B. The issue of an option for removing one's name from a Referendum Petition after having previously signed it. Currently there is NO such provision in the Charter (which means the option does not exist). Is such a provision warranted or desirable? If so, the process must be well-defined. The deadline for removing ones name must also be well-defined and should not (for hopefully obvious reasons) exceed the deadline for the petitioners' submission of names.

3A. The issue of communication by the City to the petitioners. Petitioners need to be notified by the City the same business day of discovery if they are short of the required signatures, if submitted prior to the deadline. People outside of and unrelated to the petition process should not be receiving any information concerning same.

3B. The issue of the required content and format of the Referendum Petition itself. It should be as comprehensive and well-defined as it is for Initiatives.