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CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

O.R. BOOK _____ PAGE _____
DATE: _____

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING
April 15, 2010**

A meeting of the Charter Review Commission (CRC) was held at the Administration Complex, Room 106-B, Port Charlotte, Florida

Roll Call

The following members were present:

Ken Doherty (Chairman), William Dryburgh, Maureen Garrard, Joseph Goggin, Suzanne Graham, John Hitzel, Thomas Rice, Julie Mathis, Paula Hess, Michael Grant, Frank Weikel, Kevin Russell (ViceChairman), Andy Dodd, Bill Folchi, Johnny Vernon

The following alternates were present:

Bill Weller, Connie Kantor, Patricia Kelly

In addition to membership, the meeting was attended by *Robert Berntsson, Esq.*, counsel for the CRC

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 4:01 p.m. EDT by *Chairman Ken Doherty*

Agenda Items:

1. Approval of Minutes of meeting held on March 18, 2010: *Chairman Doherty* confirmed that all of the members present had previously reviewed these Minutes. There being no additions nor deletions the motion to approve these Minutes was made and seconded and the Minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Approval of CRC Expenses to Date: *Chairman Doherty* referred to the invoice from Robert Berntsson, Esq. for services rendered the CRC during March. This invoice had been previously distributed to membership for their review and a copy of this invoice is attached to these Minutes as Attachment "A". A motion was made and seconded to approve payment of the invoice. *Chairman Doherty* then reviewed an updated list of expenses from the last meeting, also previously distributed to membership, a copy of which is attached to these Minutes as Attachment "B". *Mr. Doherty* noted that he would discuss the availability of additional funds for administrative support if it becomes necessary, saying that he would confirm flexibility of line items with Administration.

3. Discussion/Vote on attorney’s draft “housekeeping” Amendment topics: Robert Berntsson, Esq., counsel for the Charter Review Commission, read each of the proposed Amendments and discussion and vote are reflected as follows:

Section 2.2.A. add language to last sentence to read: “Each candidate for the office of commissioner shall reside within the district from which such candidate seeks election for at least six (6) months immediately prior to the time of qualifying to run for that office, and during the term of office for each commissioner shall reside in the district from which such commissioner ran for office, provided that any commissioner who is removed from the district by redistricting may continue to serve during the balance of the term of office, and providing further that any such commissioner who shall be temporarily removed from the district from which such commissioner ran for office by reason of calamity or natural disaster shall be deemed to be residing in such district * However, any commissioner who shall remove his or her residency from the district for which he or she is elected other than by reason of redistricting, or temporarily by reason of calamity or natural disaster, shall thereupon become disqualified to represent said district and the office of any such commissioner shall be deemed vacant.”

Discussion - *Maureen Garrard* asked if it was necessary to clarify what “temporary” meant and Mr. Berntsson replied that it would be left to interpretation depending on circumstances. *Frank Weikel* pointed out that if the word “temporary” had been in there originally former Commissioner Sara Devos would not have been removed from office. He added that a reasonable period of time should be specified. Mr. Berntsson addressed these concerns by proposing the following language be inserted “... provided such Commissioner intends to return to such District.” where the * symbol appears above. Upon motion made and seconded a vote was taken.

Vote - Unanimous **approval** of this proposed Amendment as re-worded in discussion. (Note: Mr. Berntsson indicated that these Amendments would be structured in the form of a question for the ballot).

Section 2.2D. amend last sentence to read: “In addition to its other powers and duties, prior to April first of each year, the board of county commissioners shall conduct an annual review of all operations of the county, including all programs and services provided, with input from the public, and take action as a result of this review for improvement of the county and the welfare of its residents.”

Discussion: After brief discussion in favor of this Amendment as worded, a motion was made and seconded and a vote was taken.

Vote: Unanimous **approval** of this proposed Amendment as shown above.

Section 2.2.J shall be amended to read: “*Debt Policy*. The county commission shall adopt and review annually, **prior to April first of each year**, a debt policy...”

Discussion: *John Hitzel* had directed an e-mail to administrative support setting forth his concern that the proposed Amendment was not inclusive enough. (A copy of this email is attached to these Minutes as Attachment “C”). *Mr. Hitzel* spoke this concern and indicated his desire to have the Amendment be more specific. *Chairman Doherty* and *William Dryburgh* agreed with *Mr. Hitzel* but said that it would be difficult to frame this detail in the Charter. *Chairman Doherty* said that with the adoption of this Amendment as written there would nevertheless be a greater opportunity for oversight. *Paula Hess* mentioned a citizen’s review committee discussed in previous meetings, asking if the debt policy and reserve policy would fall under the purview of such a body. *Chairman Doherty* said that there would be further discussion of this proposed committee at the May meeting. Upon motion duly made and seconded a vote was taken.

Vote: Approval of this proposed Amendment as shown above, with no dissenting votes.

Section 2.2.K. shall be amended to read: “*Reserve Policy*. The county commission shall adopt and review annually, **prior to April first of each year**, a reserve (stabilization funds) policy...”

Discussion: Upon motion duly made and seconded a vote was taken.

Vote: Approval of this proposed Amendment as shown above, with no dissenting votes.

Section 3.2. add language at end of existing section to read: “**Any person holding the office of sheriff, property appraiser, tax collector, clerk of the circuit court, or supervisor of elections who shall remove his or her residency from Charlotte County shall thereupon become disqualified to hold said office and the office of any such person shall be deemed vacant.**”

Discussion: *Julie Mathis* asked if language to cover calamities and disasters should be added to this also, and *Mr. Berntsson* replied that he did not do this as these Officers are county-wide. *Michael Grant* mentioned a hurricane or similar disaster that would make the whole county un-inhabitable and it was discussed that something of that magnitude

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O.R. BOOK _____ PAGE _____
DATE: _____

would create far bigger problems than the residency of the Constitutional Officers. *Chairman Doherty* added that in that situation there would probably be State and National policies to safeguard. Upon motion duly made and seconded a vote was taken.

Vote: Unanimous **approval** of this proposed Amendment as shown above.

Section 4.2.C.(1) add language to end of existing language read: “Members and alternates of the charter review commission shall reside within the county for at least six (6) months immediately prior to the time of appointment and during the term of the appointment. Any member or alternate who shall remove his or her residency from Charlotte County shall be deemed to have resigned from the charter review commission.”

Discussion: *Paula Hess* said that she would like this to specify that the member and/or alternate should be a registered voter in this County, as that indicates they are interested in matters that affect this County. *Maureen Garrard* and others agreed with this and it was suggested that appropriate language be inserted to specify that members and alternates “ be a registered voter in Charlotte County...” *Frank Weikel* asked about adding language regarding an attendance policy, and in discussion it was determined that this would be done by general By-Laws. Upon motion duly made and seconded a vote was taken.

Vote: Unanimous **approval** of this proposed Amendment as re-worded in discussion.

Section 4.2.C.(3) amend to read: “Expenses of the charter review commission shall be verified by a majority vote of the commission and forwarded to the board of county commissioners for payment from the general fund of the county, except that routine administrative expenses shall be paid from the general fund as incurred.”

Discussion: Mr. Berntsson raised a concern that if this was rejected by the voters the CRC might not be able to continue to handle administrative expenses in the way it has been done in the past. He pointed out that the Commission had already received an interpretation from the County Attorney that routine administrative expenses can be paid when due subject to later approval by membership. A motion was made and seconded to withdraw the initial motion for vote. In discussion a consensus agreed to remove this proposed Amendment from consideration and put it in the model By-Laws.

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL
UNTIL ADOPTED BY THE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

O.R. BOOK _____ PAGE _____
DATE: _____

Vote: None taken, proposed Amendment removed from consideration.

4. Discussion/Vote on BCC Sub-Committee's recommendations: The following topics were recommendations from the Board of County Commissioners sub-Committee and discussion and vote are reflected accordingly:

It is the recommendation of this sub-Committee to keep the Board of County Commissioner elections partisan.

Discussion: *Maureen Garrard* recounted testimony heard in an interview with Sheriff Cameron earlier in the day, which supported keeping the elections partisan. *Vice Chairman Russell* said that the problem he has with partisan elections is a closed primary and disenfranchisement. *Mr. Russell* mentioned that declarations to run can be used as a ploy. *Paula Hess* said that parties train a candidate in the art of politicking in addition to providing some funding without which some candidates could not run. *Maureen Garrard* observed that the primary is a State law and she was not sure that removing partisanship would change anything about closing a primary. *Michael Grant* said that there would be merit to non-partisanship if Commissioners were elected by District, but he agreed that party affiliation was necessary to define the policies of a candidate who cannot personally meet all of the voters. *Vice Chairman Russell* observed that this question is intertwined with the issue of single member districts, adding that it was hard to have one discussion without the other. *Chairman Doherty* said that ideally non-partisan is the way to go on the local level, but the reality is that you do not meet all of the voters. *Mr. Doherty* also mentioned candidates who change parties to win an election, an exception to the assumption that you know who you are voting for because of party affiliation. *Mr. Doherty* also acknowledged that this is closely tied to the issue of single members Districts, and in response to a question from *Paula Hess* said that the BCC sub-Committee had not recommended making a change to single member Districts. *Vice Chairman Russell* asked if this subject would be revisited for further discussion and vote in connection with a possible change of government structure and *Mr. Doherty* and *Paula Hess* said that it would. A motion was made and seconded to leave the Board of County Commissioners partisan and a vote was taken.

Vote: The recommendation was **approved** by twelve (12) affirmative votes with three (3) members dissenting.

It is the recommendation of this sub-Committee to set a limit of three elected terms for Commissioners, assuming that an appointed term cannot count against the total.

Discussion: *ViceChairman Russell* indicated that he does not favor term limits, preferring that people be allowed to vote for whoever they want. *Maureen Garrard* agreed, speaking from experience as a staffer, adding that term limits are not needed and they shift the balance of power to institutional memory. *Paula Hess* commented on the value of name recognition, indicating that twelve years would be long enough for a person to hold office. *Joseph Goggin* said that in his opinion the vote determines term limits. *Michael Grant* said that money plays an important role, indicating that there is an undue burden on the newcomer candidate who does not have as easy a job of raising funds as the incumbent does. *Mr. Grant* said that in this sense you are limiting the choice of candidates for whom people can vote. *John Hitzel* said that he favors term limits, but not at the local level. *Paula Hess* pointed out that term limits would not be needed if Commissioners were elected by District. *Johnny Vernon* commented on the learning curve that is needed. He also observed that many times people do not even know their Commissioners, they just vote out whomever is in office. *Maureen Garrard* agreed, offering some statistics on voter participation. *Bill Dryburgh* indicated that he was in favor of the three term limit, saying that a level of complacency sets in after twelve years. *Frank Weikel* read the responses received during interview of the County Commissioners, saying that he could support either way but personally does not like term limits. *Chairman Doherty* indicated that under the current system he felt that a three term limit was appropriate. There was a motion and second to vote to approve the proposed recommendation. *Tom Rice* said that the language would need to be refined and said it was premature to vote today. *Chairman Doherty* said that he thought a vote should be taken anyway just to get an indication from the members, and ballot language could be examined at a later time.

Vote: The recommendation was **approved** by eight (8) affirmative votes, with seven (7) members dissenting.

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL
UNTIL ADOPTED BY THE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

O.R. BOOK _____ PAGE _____
DATE: _____

It is the recommendation of this sub-Committee to make no change concerning the rotation of names on the BCC election ballot

Discussion: A motion was made and seconded to leave the BCC election ballots as they currently exist. (Note: Dr. Goggin left the room during discussion)

Vote: The recommendation was **approved** by all present.

It is the recommendation of this sub-Committee to make no changes regulating election financing.

Discussion: A motion was made and seconded to leave election financing regulations as they currently exist.

Vote: The recommendation was **approved** by all present.

5. Sub-Committee Reports:

(Note: Dr. Goggin returned to the room)

Bill Folchi, Chairman of the Other Boards and Agencies sub-Committee, reported that his sub-Committee had completed scheduled interviews and indicated that they would have one last meeting to develop their report. *Mr. Folchi* said this report would be ready for presentation at the May meeting.

Maureen Garrard, Chairman of the Constitutional Officers sub-Committee, reported that her sub-Committee had completed all but one scheduled interview and at this time it did not appear that many recommendations were anticipated.

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL
UNTIL ADOPTED BY THE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

O.R. BOOK _____ PAGE _____
DATE: _____

(*Ms. Garrard* left the meeting at 5:00 p.m. EDT due to prior commitment)

Julie Mathis, Chairman of the Administration Staff sub-Committee, reported that her sub-Committee had completed interviews and their report would be presented at the May meeting.

Johnny Vernon, Chairman of the Board of County Commissioners sub-Committee, reported that his sub-Committee had completed their interviews and thanked his membership.

Ken Doherty reported on behalf of the Joint Focus sub-Committee (Administration Staff/BCC), indicating specific discussion of the County Chair/Administrator form of government at their meeting on April 7, 2010. He added that they would be studying Orange County as the model. *Mr. Doherty* said that preliminary voting in the sub-Committee indicated four in favor of a two year study, two in favor of a possibly faster time and one member favored immediately placing the proposal on the ballot. Robert Berntsson described an Amendment in Pinellas County to reconstitute the Charter Review Commission for purposes of studying the County Charter. *Paula Hess* recalled that there were those on the sub-Committee who favored putting the proposed change in government on the ballot this year, adding that it might not be that complicated to present. *Bill Dryburgh* described his positive experience in Orange County when the similar change occurred. *Ms. Hess* voiced her concern that the BCC would not reconstitute this Commission with the same members knowing the intent, but was assured that the Amendment would be worded to specify the same members. *Michael Grant* asked if the BCC could withhold funding and *Mr. Doherty* said he did not think that they could but directed *Mr. Berntsson* to verify. *Frank Weikel* asked how this proposed change would be affected if Englewood and/or Deep Creek decided to incorporate, adding his concern that more time is needed to educate the public. *Julie Mathis* added her concern for time to educate the voter. *John Hitzel* mentioned the possibility of Babcock also incorporating at some time in the future. *Mr. Doherty* called for a consensus of whether or not this was worthy of further study, and received a positive consensus. *Mr. Doherty* indicated that this Joint sub-Committee would be meeting again on April 21, 2010 after examining the material received from Orange County and would deliver a recommendation to the full Commission.

Chairman Doherty reminded everyone that the reports would be presented at the special meeting on May 13, 2007, to be voted on at the meeting on May 20, 2010.

(*Bill Weller* left the meeting at 5:10 p.m. EDT due to prior commitment)

6 .Public Input: Citizen Percy Angelo expressed a desire to address the issues of single member Districts as well as non-partisan elections. Ms. Angelo was a former candidate for County Commission and had previously submitted an email to the CRC through administrative support, a copy of which is attached to these Minutes as Attachment "D". A review of this will support the comments made by Ms. Angelo at the meeting. At the conclusion of her comments Ms. Angelo asked the Commission to revisit the issues of single member Districts as well as non-partisan elections. *Paula Hess* asked Ms. Angelo if she had an opinion on the form of government that is being discussed. Ms. Angelo indicated that she had reviewed previous Minutes to familiarize herself and said that her concern was where this structure might leave the Commissioners and the potential for conflict of duties. *Ms. Hess* said that the duties were well delineated in the model Charter, and responded to another concern of Ms. Angelo by saying that the mayor is elected as well as the Commissioners.

Citizen Joe Blais from Englewood East Neighborhood Watch described his previous experience in Hillsboro County, which had five single District Commissioners and two at-large. He mentioned some concerns for candidates, such as gated and walled communities. Mr. Blais said that Charlotte County is fragmented geographically, urging a need for unification. Mr. Blais acknowledged the importance of what is being discussed as a change of government structure, adding that many people do not know what the Charter Review Commission is really doing. *Chairman Doherty* said that he hoped Mr. Blais would help in getting out the word.

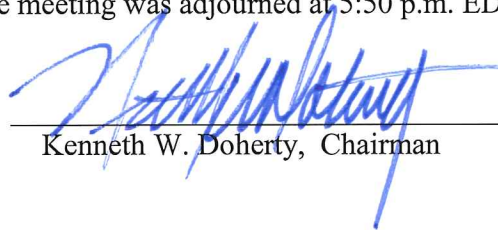
Citizen Rom Mattesich, Chairman of the Charlotte County Democratic Party, Executive Committee, spoke in support of single member Districts. He indicated that people in the County are not properly represented, saying that the current Board of County Commissioners is comprised of five Republicans and no Democrats. Mr. Mattesich added that the issues of term limits and partisanship would be moot if a switch was made to single member Districts. He also addressed the high cost of campaigning. Mr. Mattesich repeated his desire for the CRC to propose single member Districts, saying that would result in better representation as well as making it financially easier for more talent to enter the political process.

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL
UNTIL ADOPTED BY THE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

O.R. BOOK _____ PAGE _____
DATE: _____

7. Commission Comments: In response to some of the public input, *Frank Weikel* told Mr. Blais that the CRC had discussed adding Commissioners and advised him of the prohibitive cost involved. *Mr. Weikel* referred to data from the Supervisor of Elections indicating the number of Republicans and Democrats per District. He said that nothing would be solved by removing partisanship and he supported the earlier recommendation of the Commission. *Paula Hess* observed that one of the reasons the new form of government was under discussion was because of the large area and the diversity in Charlotte County, adding that the County acts like a city does in the delivery of services. *Michael Grant* said that in his opinion the disadvantage of single member Districts is parochialism, adding that far less would be accomplished at Commission meetings without a unifying force such as an elected Mayor. *Tom Rice* said that a suggestion for future Charter Review Commissions would be to have early public meetings, encouraging input at the front end rather than just when Amendments are ready to be presented. This concluded comments from the membership.

8. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m. EDT.



Kenneth W. Doherty, Chairman

ATTACHMENT "A"

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UNTIL ADOPTED BY THE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

O.R. BOOK _____ PAGE _____

DATE: _____

BERNARDSON, HERSHAGEN, GUNDERSON, WARSLER & WIDEMAN, LLP

18401 MURDOCK CIRCLE, SUITE C
PORT CHARLOTTE, FLORIDA 33948
(941) 627-1000
TAX ID#: 26-2501255

1861 PLACIDA ROAD, SUITE 204
ENGLEWOOD, FLORIDA 34223-4949
(941) 474-7713
TAX ID#: 26-2501255

April 1, 2010

Order
Charter Review Commission
Murdock Circle
Port Charlotte, FL 33948

Bill Number 5624
Billed through 03/31/2010
Reply to: Port Charlotte

Final

Case # 1729801 RHB

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES RENDERED

1.0	RHB	Review e-mail message(s) to and from Ms. Pinder; Prepare for and attend BCC Subcommittee meeting.	1.50 hrs	300.00
1.0	RHB	Review e-mail message(s) to and from Ms. Pinder; Review Minutes.	0.25 hrs	50.00
1.0	RHB	Researching law regarding required number of Commissioners; Review e-mail message(s) to and from Mr. Doherty.	0.75 hrs	150.00
1.0	RHB	Telephone conference with Mr. Doherty.	0.25 hrs	50.00
1.0	RHB	Review e-mail message(s) to and from Ms. Pinder.	0.25 hrs	50.00
1.0	RHB	Review e-mail message(s) to and from Ms. Pinder; Review "Housekeeping Amendment" documents.	0.50 hrs	100.00
1.0	RHB	Conference with and attend Charter Review Commission Monthly meeting; Research law regarding Penalty Provisions for non-compliance with Charter Provisions.	2.50 hrs	500.00
3.0	RHB	Draft Housekeeping Amendments; Review e-mail message(s) to and from Mr. Doherty.	3.50 hrs	700.00
0.25	RHB	Review e-mail message(s) to and from Ms. Pinder; Review Administrative Code.	0.25 hrs	50.00
1.50	RHB	Review e-mail message(s) to and from Ms. Pinder; Researching Law regarding Ordinance Enactment; Telephone call to Ms. Knowlton; Review e-mail message(s) to and from Administration Subcommittee members; Telephone Conference with Ms. Knowlton.	1.50 hrs	300.00
0.25	RHB	Review e-mail message(s) to and from Ms. Knowlton.	0.25 hrs	50.00
0.50	RHB	Review e-mail message(s) to and from Ms. Pinder; Review e-mail message(s) to and from Ms. Garrard; Review Minutes; Review e-mail message(s) to and from Mr. Doherty.	0.50 hrs	100.00
0.25	RHB	Telephone conference with Mr. Doherty.	0.25 hrs	50.00
1.50	RHB	Review e-mail message(s) to and from Mr. Folchi; Researching law; Review various charters; Review e-mail message(s) to and from Ms. Knowlton.	1.50 hrs	300.00

Total fees for this matter

===== \$2,750.00

SES

ATTACHMENT "B"

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 UNTIL ADOPTED BY THE
 CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

O.R. BOOK _____ PAGE _____
 DATE: _____

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION EXPENSES
 04/12/2010

CATEGORY	AMOUNT BUDGETED	AMOUNT SHOWN ON LAST MONTH'S SPREADSHEET	ADDITIONAL EXPENSES 03/14/2010 THROUGH 04/12/2010	BALANCE REMAINING
Administrative Support (paid through Snelling Services)	\$9,704.00	\$4,368.04	\$2,015.36	\$3,319.60
Rentals and Leases	\$664.00			\$664.00
Postage	\$55.00			\$55.00
Office supplies	\$140.00	\$149.40	\$66.40	(\$75.80)
Advertising (legal)	\$2,788.00			\$2,788.00
*Attorney fees submitted (R. Bertsson Esq)	\$21,000.00	\$5,250.00	\$2,750.00	\$13,000.00
TOTALS	\$34,351.00	\$9,768.44	\$4,831.76	\$19,750.80

*NOTE: Attorney fees are not paid until approved by membership.

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL
UNTIL ADOPTED BY THE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

O.R. BOOK _____ PAGE _____
DATE: _____

To: Chairman Ken Doherty
Charter Review Commission

From: John Hitzel

Subject: Proposed Housekeeping Amendments from 3/18/10 meeting

I appreciate the house keeping items in Attorney Berntsson 4/13/10 distribution. I do not believe the paragraph related to the "Debt Policy" goes far enough. The requirements as currently specified in the charter allow for vague interpretation of what information should be contained in the annual review and allows for broad statements in lieu of published, detailed debt circumstances. I believe the charter should specify that the report be budget wide to include all revolving funds as well as general fund items. The report should detail debt by organization with detailed principle, interest rate, term and purpose identified by each specific outstanding instrument.

I realize that is a lot of detail to be required by the charter. However, at this time in county government, commissioners and other officials do not know the amount of debt let alone the details of that debt. I believe there would be a tendency to better manage and pay down county debt with a detailed annual report.

cc: Ann Pinder

ATTACHMENT "D"

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UNTIL ADOPTED BY THE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

O.R. BOOK _____ PAGE _____
DATE: _____

Percy Angelo

PERCY ANGELO
15 SPYGLASS ALLEY
PLACIDA, FL 33946

April 14, 2010

Dear Charter Review Commission Members;

I am writing to urge your adoption of two improvements to the Charlotte County charter, the election of commissioners by the residents of the districts in which they reside and making commissioner elections nonpartisan. Having recently run for election as a Democrat in commission district 3, I have immediate experience which supports these two changes.

In campaigning I spent many months going door to door in all parts of the county. I found universal confusion on the part of voters who believed that they only vote for the commissioner serving their portion of the county. Accordingly, they expressed surprise at the need to learn about the candidates outside their own district.

From the candidate's perspective it is extraordinarily difficult to reach the county as a whole. Mailings are prohibitively expensive when they must go to all voters. Door to door visits are difficult in a county with so many gated communities. Media advertising is very expensive. And it is even more so when one considers that the County lies within two media markets, Sarasota and Fort Myers. Advertising in Fort Myers does not reach West County and advertising in Sarasota reaches West County but does not reach the rest of the County. Buying ad time in two markets is prohibitive.

In the past the Sun Newspapers have decided NOT to give coverage to candidates in uncontested races. This means, for example, that the pre-election editions of the paper prior to the primary do not cover a number of candidates, usually Democrats and candidates without party affiliation, who have no party opponents. The League of Women Voters' candidates' forum has similar restrictions on participation. A candidate with an unopposed primary cannot get coverage for his or her campaign until after the August primary. At that time all the snowbirds are gone. The likely consequence is that

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL
UNTIL ADOPTED BY THE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

O.R. BOOK _____ PAGE _____
DATE: _____

the snowbird/vote by mail voter (1/3 of the electorate) will probably vote along party lines without any information about the opposing candidates. This does not make for an informed electorate.

My personal experience bears this out. Despite running as a Democrat in Charlotte County I won the early voting (about 1/3 of the vote). I very barely lost the election day vote (another 1/3), but my loss of the vote by mail vote (the last 1/3) made the difference. The vote by mail people, by and large, were those who were never exposed to my campaign because they left the area before there was any coverage. I'm well over disappointment in the result but I do think the government structure should promote an informed electorate.

Providing that a candidate be elected from his or her own district increases the likelihood that the voters know about the candidate, increases the ability of the candidate to reach all district voters, increases the accountability of the elected official and is consistent with what the public think happens anyway!

For the reasons given above I also believe that elections for county commissioner should be nonpartisan. Again, while campaigning, I was told time and again by voters that they didn't believe county issues were Republican or Democratic. And I agree with them. I defy anyone to give me a recent county issue that had anything to do with the issues of the state or national parties. Candidates running without party affiliation particularly suffer in this situation, and that is a shame since we have had extremely attractive NPA candidates in the recent past.

Nonpartisan voting for commissioner would eliminate another serious problem, the disenfranchisement of many primary voters. By statute, in primaries where there is no one running for a particular office except those from one party, all voters, regardless of registration, are allowed to vote in that primary since the primary will be the only election and otherwise they would never have a chance to vote. In effect in Charlotte County this means that where there are only Republican candidates for an office, the primary victor is declared the election victor since there is no Democratic opponent. To make sure that all registered voters still have the right to vote the statute provides that in such elections Democrats and NPA candidates are allowed to vote in the Republican primary for that office, since otherwise they would have no vote at all. Unfortunately this statutory protection is lost if a candidate, no matter how lacking in credibility, files for the office as an NPA or a Democrat. This fear is not imagined. In a recent election we had a candidate filing for election as a Democrat who was essentially unknown even to the Democrats and never campaigned, but his presence prevented Democratic voters from being able to vote in the only meaningful election.

THESE MINUTES ARE NOT OFFICIAL
UNTIL ADOPTED BY THE
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

O.R. BOOK _____ PAGE _____
DATE: _____

ATTACHMENT "D" pg. 3

The Charlotte County Commission should simply be about competence and good government, and parties have very little to do with those qualifications at the county level.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for your service to Charlotte County.

Very truly yours,

Percy Angelo