

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
OTHER BOARDS AND AGENCIES SUB-COMMITTEE
Minutes of Meeting
April 28, 2010

A meeting of the Other Boards and Agencies sub-Committee of the Charter Review Commission was held at the Administration Complex, Room 106B, Port Charlotte, Florida.

Roll Call

The following members were present:

Bill Folchi (Chairman), John Hitzel, Ken Doherty

The following members were absent

Connie Kantor (alternate)

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:30 p.m. EDT by *Chairman Folchi*

Agenda Items

(1) **Approval of Minutes** of the meetings held March 30, 2010 and April 6, 2010.

Chairman Folchi confirmed that the Minutes had been previously distributed to those present and there being no deletions nor additions to either set, the Minutes of March 30, 2010 and April 6, 2010 were approved.

(2) **Discuss/Develop Final Report for this sub-Committee:** *Chairman Folchi* had prepared a draft for discussion and this had been previously distributed to the members for review. With the exception of a few changes in verbiage the draft Report met with the approval of the members present. The bulk of discussion concerned Section V (b), dealing with a proposal to extend the term of the Charter Review Commission. This proposal resulted from observations that the current time frame does not support the quality of result that should be derived. *Ken Doherty* remarked that this was closely aligned with a forthcoming proposal from the Joint Focus sub-Committee, seeking to reconstitute the CRC for a defined period in order to study and present to the voter a proposed change in governmental structure. In discussion it was agreed that rather than proposing a permanent Charter Review Commission with staggered terms, a recommendation should be made to modify the Charter. This modification would require the Board to appoint the CRC members at least eighteen (18) months before the election.

It was agreed that if accepted by the full Commission this could be placed on the ballot separately from any proposal for reconstitution.

The other recommendation in this sub-Committee's Final Report was that the Economic Development Office be organized to report directly to the Board.

A copy of the final report, incorporating the changes resulting from this meeting, is attached to these Minutes as Attachment "A".

(3) **Public Input:** None

(4) **Commission Comments:** *Chairman Folchi* said that instead of a structural change he would like to find a way of improving the quality of the Board of County Commissioners. Discussion ensued on how this could be accomplished, with specific mention made to the similarity between running the County and running a successful corporation. The members said that it would be beneficial to have Commissioners with a background that suited them for successfully managing a large organization. It was agreed that a lot of talent existed in the community and suggestions were made for either increasing the salary to make it competitive and attractive to a qualified professional or eliminating salaries completely. *Ken Doherty* recalled that the latter had been suggested during previous CRC sessions but had not received support as it was regarded as elitist. He also said that he had tried to propose qualifications for Commissioners. *Chairman Folchi* liked the idea of eliminating salaries. *Mr. Hitzel* acknowledged the concern about elitism, but added that in this economic climate there would be little chance of the voters agreeing to increased salaries. *Mr. Doherty* also pointed out that if any of the proposed structural changes were made to local government the Board would return to a purely legislative entity with less time required of the Commissioners. *John Hitzel* referred to the success of the Airport Authority as a business entity. There was also discussion about two readings of an Ordinance, an issue that has been received in public input. It was concluded that these opinions would not be reflected in the recommendations of this sub-Committee but would be brought up for discussion before the general membership.

(5) **Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 4: 15 p.m . EDT.

Bill Folchi

ATTACHMENT "A"
CHARLOTTE COUNTY
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
18500 Murdock Circle
Port Charlotte, Florida 33948



Charlotte County Charter Review Commission
Other Boards and Committees Subcommittee

Final Report
May 13, 2010

- I. Introduction.** The Other Boards and Committees (OBAC) Subcommittee was chartered to interact with government and civic entities that are not explicitly mentioned in the Charlotte County Home Rule Charter but are nevertheless involved in public policy and might be effected by changes proposed. The group met 7 times during the period from February 18, 2010 to April 6, 2010 and met with 9 different groups. In our first organizational meetings we developed a list of agencies to meet with and a list of topics for discussion for each meeting. In addition to the agency specific topics, we decided to include some of the general questions being covered by the overall Charter Review Commission (CRC). This report presents a concise summary of the operation and findings of the Subcommittee. It includes our impressions from the meetings with the subject organizations as well as general opinions gleaned from discussions with various civic groups. The details of each meeting were captured in the minutes and are not repeated herein.
- II. Subject Organizations.** The organizations we met with include:
- a. Punta Gorda Chamber of Commerce, Charlotte County Chamber of Commerce, Englewood Chamber of Commerce.
 - b. Charlotte County Public School Board
 - c. City of Punta Gorda
 - d. Englewood Water District

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- e. Enterprise Charlotte Economic Development Council
- f. Babcock Ranch
- g. Charlotte County Airport Authority

We met with each group for approximately an hour. The discussion topics were provided in advance. In general the focus of the discussion with each group was economics and operations. We were looking for ideas that would improve the economic outlook of Charlotte County and enable County Government to operate more efficiently.

III. Findings. Listed below are concise statements which summarize the opinions gathered from the meetings we conducted. These issues are important to the future of Charlotte County and should be resolved. Changing the Charter may be the proper course of action in addressing these issue but they may also be resolvable by operational changes.

- a. Charlotte County uses the slogan: "Open for Business" but does not present a consistent, easy to follow set of procedures that enable business people to make capital investments in a timely manner. The permit system should be streamlined and made more business friendly.
- b. The Economic Development Office is organized as a function under the County Administrator at the same level as all other county functions and therefore operates at the same pace and is given the same level of importance.
- c. The BCC meeting procedure is not Business Friendly. The schedule is too unpredictable and the lead time does not permit sufficient preparation. When a businessperson wants to address the BCC meeting he/she often wastes the best part of a day not knowing when the issue will come up for discussion. The agenda should be organized to be more respectful of citizens time..
- d. The lack of qualification standards for elected office coupled with low compensation may not attract the most qualified candidates except for those who are financially independent..

IV. General Questions. The following are the consensus of opinions expressed by members of the subject groups on possible changes to the Charter of general interest.

- a. Single Member districts are not appropriate for Charlotte County
- b. The present form of government is appropriate for Charlotte County.
- c. Elected County Administrator is not appropriate for Charlotte County
- d. Five county commissioners elected at large seems to be the right mix for Charlotte County.
- e. Term limits for elected officials are not appropriate for Charlotte County Commissioners.

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V. **Recommendations.** In our discussions we developed the following suggestions that should be moved forward to a change in the charter or a change in the operation of the County Government in some other form.

- a. **Economic Development Office (Don Root).** The future of business in Charlotte County is dependent upon the success of this organization. It is presently organized under the County Administrator. It's operation is sufficiently different from the other departments reporting to County Administrator to warrant a change in organization. The time frames required to react to opportunities developed by the Economic Development Office are too short to be accommodated by the County Administrator. It is therefore our recommendation that the Don Root and his organization be organized to report directly to the BCC.
- b. **CRC Organization.** The operation of the CRC requires long and frequent evaluation and deliberations. It requires public input and education of the of the public into the details of plans for change of the charter. It is our impression that the timeframe of one year does not properly support the quality of result that should be derived from the CRC's operation. We therefore recommend that the home rule charter be modified as follows:

The Present wording of the first sentence of **Sec. 4.2, C. (1)** is:

“A charter review commission consisting of fifteen (15) members and three (3) alternates shall be appointed by the board of county commissioners at least eleven (11) months before the general election occurring in 1998 and at least eleven (11) months before the general election occurring every (6) years thereafter, to review the home rule charter and propose any amendments or revisions which may be advisable for placement on the general election ballot.”

We propose the following wording:

“A charter review commission consisting of fifteen (15) members and three (3) alternates shall be appointed by the board of county commissioners at least eleven (11) months before the general election occurring in 1998 and at least eighteen (18) months before the general election occurring every (6) years thereafter, to review the home rule charter and propose any amendments or revisions which may be advisable for placement on the general election ballot.”

Submitted by

Bill Folchi, Chairman