

**Charter Review Commission  
Other Boards and Agencies  
Subcommittee Meeting  
September 13, 2021**

A meeting of the Charter Review Commission Other Boards and Agencies Subcommittee was held at Charlotte County Administration Complex, Room B-106, Port Charlotte, Florida at 2:00 p.m. on September 13, 2021

**Roll Call:**

The following members were present:

Theresa Murtha, Chair  
Steve Drake

Members Absent: Adam Riley.

Citizens: None.

**Agenda Items:**

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 PM by Chairman Theresa Murtha.

**Approval of Minutes:** Minutes from August 17, 2021 were approved by consensus.

**I. Citizen Input:** None.

**II. Old Business:**

- a. Update on upcoming Interviews – confirmed schedules.
- b. Review of Issues raised:

- 1. Restricting monies raised for local campaigns – new question: Should there be restrictions on the amount of money that an individual can raise for local campaigns in government?
- 2. Minimum Age requirements to serve – the “younger” side
- 3. Protecting Airport District from State changes – new question: Should there be a County (Commissioners) weigh in on any change the State might make to Airport Management?
- 4. 6 months residency requirements – new question: Should the residency requirement be increased for these specific positions?

**III. New Business:**

- a. 3:00 p.m. Interview with Joan LeBeau, Director, Urban Design, Punta Gorda

I am the Director of Urban Design which includes the Building Department, the Planning Division, Code Compliance and Enforcement, Zoning and “Coastal and Heartland National Estuary Partnership” (consisting of 16 counties – we host).

**Do you think we should introduce Term Limits in the Charter for our Legislators?** If you do introduce Term Limits, I would suggest that they be alternating so you do not lose everyone at the same time. You need someone to provide follow-through, to facilitate the change and provide consistency.

**Do you think there should be fewer or more Commissioners on the Board of Commissioners?** I think five is ample even with the increased size of the county. If you have too many members it gets difficult to get things accomplished. I think the Commissioners do a fine job in moving their projects through.

**Should County Department Heads and members of Administration be required to be county residents?** That is tough as I am torn. The City does not require residency in Punta Gorda mainly because our salaries do not afford us too. Being a Director, you do want to know what is going on in your city or county. I see the benefits to living and knowing what's going on in the County. For the County, "Yes", because you have a wide range of places to live.

**Should Constitutional Officers be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners or elected?** Elected. They work for the people more than working with the Commissioners and people have the right to vote.

**Should the County Administrator be appointed or elected?** Appointed.

**Should the percentage of the required signatures for the public to propose a change or a new ordinance be reduced or increased from 10 percent to another number?** 10% is appropriate.

**Should the State of Florida pass Casino Gambling, should there be a provision in the Charter for allowing Charlotte County citizens to give input to the County on Casino Gambling?** Yes, through an ordinance only – public hearings. Not on an election ballot. Yes, it is our County.

**Should the Charter Review Commission recommend changes to the Home Rule Charter that would help in business development efforts or to improve the business climate in Charlotte County? What changes would you recommend in that regard?** You have an economic development department and through them the Commissioners should be able to regulate or discuss the ways to attract businesses. I am not in favor of that being in the Charter.

**Do you think the County should have a requirement by the Charter to update their comprehensive plan on a specific schedule? Should the Charter require specific elements to be within that plan? For instance, water resources.** That is done every seven years per State requirement, so I don't see the need to have it in the Charter. Additional Elements are added depending on what the citizens are asking for. It is a huge cost to review, update and add to the Comprehensive Plan. Water Resources is important but is covered under the other Elements.

**Is the project selection allocation process for the one percent sales tax in the best interest of the overall county and fair to every region of the county?** Yes. I believe that you have a good amount of people on the committee if the Commissioners are picking people who are active in the County and know what is going on. I would suggest you allow that Committee to help present the projects that are going to be decided on by the Commissioners. If Committee members

do not participate in the process you later have difficulties finding people to volunteer, or they feel slighted, or feel that staff is putting their own twist on what is being presented.

**Should there be a continuing oversight advisory committee dedicated to this tax?** Unsure. The City constantly watches their portion of their funds.

**Should there be a requirement for an Environment impact planning?** This is done along with the Comprehensive Plan that is reviewed every seven years. Staff needs to know what the needs are in the community and keep up good communication.

**Should there be a need Congress or Forum for County Leadership to discuss major long-range planning?** Absolutely. In the past the City and County used to meet regularly on joint projects with businesses. It would be tough to schedule with so many meetings that are already happening. Arranging a Strategic Conference without including individual agendas – that is the hard part. I do not know how you would go about organizing this – maybe through Human Resources?

**Are there any other changes to the County Home Charter that should be considered?** An issue I am aware of is the difficulty of communication among staff members and others. The ability to have one on one conversation with staff. It is hard getting directly to certain people in the County. We have the Design Studio in Punta Gorda to explain to people their project (housing finance, code compliance). The County is said to be harder to work with in building projects as opposed to Punta Gorda.

**Should there be restrictions on the amounts of money raised for financing local campaigns?** I am not against it as it would level the playing field.

**Should there be a minimum age to serve in a local election?** I would like to see it based on experience rather than the age issue. I would set the criteria higher.

**Should the county via a referendum or commission vote have a say on any major changes to the airport management? (Currently state law prevails)** No opinion.

**Should residency requirements to hold positions such as commissioner, sheriff, supervisor of elections be longer than the current six months?** One year would not be out of the question. I agree that expanding six months to one year would be appropriate.

**Should voting for commissioner be restricted to residents within the district the commissioner represents?** No, as you have overreaching items that affect everybody. I would not be opposed to it being open to everyone. I want someone who knows everything and is just not relegated to their own district. I am not in favor of district level voting.

**Are there any issues such as Charlotte Count geographic jurisdiction for water resources that might be addressed by the CRC?** We handle the issues through jurisdictional, inner local agreements or state statute.

**Do you see the need for desalinization in the future?** No opinion. I would have to study the issues. It would be up to your local utilities to inform you of issues.

**A question raised to consider:** Should there be something to cement the good relationships currently experienced in local government? Difficult to put in writing. Hiring the right people is key – personable people who can listen and communicate.

**End Interview:**

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b. 3:45 p.m. Interview with Sharon Neuhofer, President Elect of the Association of Realtors

**Do you think we should introduce Term Limits in the Charter for our Legislators?** No, they are handled by the voters every election.

**Do you think there should be fewer or more Commissioners on the Board of Commissioners?** For our population I believe we have the right number of Commissioners. Five is a good number.

**Should County Department Heads and members of Administration be required to be county residents?** County Administrator- yes. Department Heads not necessarily nor those who are not the “decision makers”, those who alter lives.

**Should Constitutional Officers be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners or elected?** Elected – you need separation. They should be answerable to the public and not the County Commissioners.

**Should the County Administrator be appointed or elected?** Appointed. Because of the scope of the many responsibilities over the county, the position should answer to the Board of County Commissioners and not be politicalized.

**Should the percentage of the required signatures for the public to propose a change or a new ordinance be reduced or increased from 10 percent to another number?** 10% Percent is a good number, we don’t want to make it too easy to get inconsequential items on the ballot that costs the citizenry more money. If they can get 10% percent of the voters’ signatures, they may have a legitimate issue, so I am comfortable with that number.

**Should the State of Florida pass Casino Gambling, should there be a provision in the Charter for allowing Charlotte County citizens to give input to the County on Casino Gambling?** I am split in my thoughts as I see both sides. Yes, citizens should have some say on what happens, that is why we have the Charter. No, if voted by the voters on a Constitutional Amendment, then it is already voted on. I would slant towards “No”.

**Should the Charter Review Commission recommend changes to the Home Rule Charter that would help in business development efforts or to improve the business climate in Charlotte County? What changes would you recommend in that regard?** I believe the Charter should just highlight the framework of what we do. The Laws and Rules should be passed by the Board of County Commissioners and should not be in the Charter. We have a good and strong Board of County Commissioners and they are responsive to our needs.

**Do you think the County should have a requirement by the Charter to update their comprehensive plan on a specific schedule? Should the Charter require specific elements**

**to be within that plan? For instance, water resources.** I think the legislative branch should handle that and it should not be addressed in our Charter. We already have a mechanism in place.

**Is the project selection allocation process for the one percent sales tax in the best interest of the overall county and fair to every region of the county?** I think it is as fair as it can be. There are a couple of layers in the process and there is public input; however, everyone will not always be happy. I believe our local folk work hard to spread and allocate funds as best as they can, basing it on priorities and needs in the County.

**Should there be a continuing oversight advisory committee dedicated to this tax?** Yes. Absolutely.

**Should there be a requirement for an Environment impact planning?** Why would you have just one if not all the different impact planning studies? Not necessary. We already have the ability by the Commissioners requesting one.

**Should there be a need Congress or Forum for County Leadership to discuss major long-range planning?** A good thing to do – as a recommendation, not in the Charter.

**Are there any other changes to the County Home Charter that should be considered?** It is a solid Charter. I remember when it was instituted and have heard no problems with it. It gives the Commissioners the authority to do what needs to be done. There are protections for the citizenry, so I do not see anything that needs to be added or removed.

**Should there be restrictions on the amounts of money raised for financing local campaigns?** No. Our current campaign financing guidelines are fine.

**Should there be a minimum age to serve in a local election?** No and nor should there be a maximum.

**Should the county via a referendum or commission vote have a say on any major changes to the airport management? (Currently state law prevails)** Yes.

**Should residency requirements to hold positions such as commissioner, sheriff, supervisor of elections be longer than the current six months?** Six months is long enough and to be honest, people work around that and if it was changed, the same thing would happen. Six months is legitimate and practical.

**Should voting for commissioner be restricted to resident within the district the commissioner represents?** Yes. More votes in one area can mandate the election of commissioner for an underserved area. I think people living in the district need to have a say who is their representative. It needs to be balanced and representative of their interests. Yes, it should be District voting.

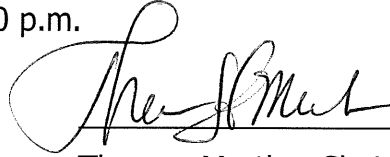
**Final Comments:** Thank you. It is an interesting process and I commend you for what you are doing.

**End of Interview:**

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**IV. Discussion:** None.

**V. Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 4:05 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2021 @ 2:00 p.m.

 11/18/2020

Theresa Murtha, Chair      Date

Other Boards & Agencies Sub-committee