

**Charter Review Commission
Other Boards and Agencies
Subcommittee Meeting
October 5, 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 October 5, 2021

Roll Call:

The following members were present:

Theresa Murtha, Chair
Steve Drake
James Coalwell

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: Minute approval was tabled.

I. Citizen Input: None.

II. Old Business: None.

III. New Business:

- a. New member James Coalwell, Alternate was welcomed to his first subcommittee meeting.
- b. Confirmed that the next meeting is Monday, October 11 at 2:00 p.m.
- c. Due to a scheduling conflict, Paul Andrews, Airport Authority was removed as an Interview subject and replaced with Vanessa Oliver, Esq., Airport Authority.

d. 2:15 p.m. Interview with Wendy Atkinson, School Board Chair

Do you think we should introduce Term Limits in the Charter for our Legislators? No. We have term limits through our elections.

Do you think there should be fewer or more Commissioners on the Board of Commissioners? Just fine with five.

Should County Department Heads and members of Administration be required to be county residents? I believe so.

Should Constitutional Officers be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners or elected? Elected.

Should the County Administrator be appointed or elected? Should absolutely be 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 fine.

If 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, I am not sure that it will ever happen in Charlotte County, but citizens should have a say.

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? No. We already have a strong Economic Development group and with the Airport Authority as well.

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. No – not necessary to go beyond State requirement.

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.

Should there be a continuing oversight advisory committee dedicated to this tax? One hundred percent, yes. We have one for our School Board referendum and we absolutely should have one on that committee as well. There should be an independent oversight committee.

Should there be a requirement for an Environment impact planning? If it involves more regulation, I will say No.

Should there be a need Congress or Forum for County Leadership to discuss major long-range planning? I don't think we need something formal. We have enough organizations that get together to discuss things.

Should there be restrictions on the amounts of money raised for financing local campaigns? No restrictions.

Should there be a minimum age to serve in a local elected position? No. That is a Florida Constitution issue.

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, I think the Airport Authority is doing a good job.

Should residency requirement to hold positions such as commissioner, sheriff, supervisor of elections be longer that the current six months? No. I'm fine with it the way it is.

Should voting for commissioner be restricted to residents within the district the commissioner represents? No, they should be countywide, but they should live in their districts like school board members.

Are there any other changes to the County Home Charter that should be considered? Not that I am aware of.

End Interview:

e. 3:00 p.m. Interview with Michael Gravenson, Planning and Zoning Board

Do you think we should introduce Term Limits in the Charter for the Board of County Commissioner? Yes, two to three term limits. Because we get set in our ways, it is hard for someone new to break in, there are a lot of people in our community who grew up here and are active but may not have the opportunity or be politically inclined to have made the connections. I think it is good to have a rotation of ideas and experiences.

Do you think there should be fewer or more Commissioners on the Board of Commissioners? The number is good – you need an odd number.

Should County Department Heads and members of Administration be required to be county residents? Yes. The citizens of the County pay their salaries and they should live where they oversee regulations and administration. People should live where they are creating policies and procedures. For extenuating circumstances, I would say it was not demanded to live in the County but highly recommended and so indicated during the hiring process. Maybe they should not be hired if they should refuse to move.

Should Constitutional Officers be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners or elected? Elected.

Should the County Administrator be appointed or elected? Appointed. The County Administrator is responsible to the Board of County Commissioners who are responsible to the voters. If faith is lost in the County Administrator, you don't want to wait for an election to handle.

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? Unchanged.

If 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? That is what a Commission meeting public input is used for. As a voting referendum, No. However, if the Commissioners were to have the right to say no, then I would agree to having that provision.

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 am not sure of any additions to add to improve the business climate in the County. The Business climate is impacted by staff and how they react to the public – they create the environment, whether pro or con against businesses. Permitting, licensing, planning department. They are either welcomed in or it could be

made difficult. I think it has improved over the years with more staffing and one person cannot control initiatives. More things are online which has improved follow-ups.

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. No, no and no. State plans already have it and what elements to include, ERA's/EERR (times to review). Since it is already there, we do not need to add another layer of bureaucracy that might not sync with the timing.

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 do not know; I have not followed.

Should there be a continuing oversight advisory committee dedicated to this tax? No.

Should there be a requirement for an Environment impact planning? No.

Should there be a need Congress or Forum for County Leadership to discuss major long-range planning? We already have this through the planning department for long range plans for the County. Nice idea to have but not in the Charter.

Should there be restrictions on the amounts of money raised for financing local campaigns? No.

Should there be a minimum age to serve in a local elected position? No. Eighteen-year-olds is okay.

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. Separate entity. Airport should stay on its own. The only thing the County gets involved with is the land use around the airport. If it is a case of someone at the State level having a specific interest in our airport, I am not sure our commissioners would do better or worse. You need to know the state laws to decide.

Should residency requirement "to qualify" to hold positions such as commissioner, sheriff, supervisor of elections be longer than the current six months? Too short, I think it should be a year. You do not know the community in six months.

Should voting for commissioner be restricted to residents within the district the commissioner represents? Yes, not countywide. I understand that the districts have different populations. With five commissioners, you potentially have 80% of the voters choosing another commissioner for that district that may not represent that district's true feelings or position.

Are there any other changes to the County Home Charter that should be considered? None.

End Interview:

f. 3:45 Interview with Eric Loche, Economic Development Partnership, (EDP) Vice President

I will be giving my answers from the perspective of the EDP and/or I will differentiate with my own opinion. EDP has 50 members with varying opinions and perspectives, and I would not want to make statements for the entire group on topics not directly related to Economic Development.

Do you think we should introduce Term Limits in the Charter for our County

Commissioners? EDP does not have an opinion. I think it would be a travesty to have a qualified candidate who could not run because they were already performing the job. Institutional knowledge is groomed and developed over time and term limits can have a negative impact.

Do you think there should be fewer or more Commissioners on the Board of

Commissioners? EDP does not have an opinion. I share that opinion.

Should County Department Heads and members of Administration be required to be

county residents? EDP does not have an opinion. I don't see where that would be of any benefit. I want the person who can get the job done, I don't care what their zip code is.

Should Constitutional Officers be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners or

elected? EDP does not have an opinion. That is a State issue and not a local concern. However, I would be happy with a qualified team of executives delegated to do that duty. By qualified I mean elected County Commissioners in this case.

Should the County Administrator be appointed or elected? EDP does not have an opinion. I

say appointed. I want the people elected to run the County to make those informed decisions.

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? EDP does not have an opinion. I believe that ten percent is too low of a number. I would not be in favor of reducing the number. I believe it is too easy to get ten percent of the population to agree on passing some issues.

If 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?

EDP does not have an opinion. Citizens do have input through our elected officials. I trust the elected officials to make good decisions. On possible contentious items, it would be nice to have the popular vote on the decision.

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?

The EDP does have an opinion but needs more data so the answer would have more meaning. The EDP is always open to ideas that advance ideas that support economic development locally and regionally. While we may not support every idea, we are interested in seeing what it is. We would be interested in economic development opportunities for improvement as it relates to Home Rule. The only thing Home Rule could change would be taxing authority. Where are we going with this question? Nothing has come across the EDP's radar that needs attention.

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. EDP does not have an opinion. I say, No. Elect people who can get the job done and then let them do it. With more rules, the more it gets in the way and with more unintended consequences.

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? EDP says it is operating just fine and we are pleased in the way it is. I think our County Commissioners have done a great job in appointing the Board. I have not heard of any alternative proposals for a way for this to be done. Absent an alternative, it has been effective, and I have no objections to the way it is done.

Should there be a continuing oversight advisory committee dedicated to this tax? I would avoid putting it in the Charter.

Should there be a requirement for an Environment impact planning? From the EDP perspective, environmental impact planning does have some impact on tourism rather than economic development. Don't we already have an environment impact department here in Charlotte County? If so, requiring a rule might just get in the way and result in unintended consequences. There are plenty of reasons of why Charlotte County should have environmental impact planning – health and welfare of our community and the economic impact of climate change as it occurs. The impact of development as it occurs around us. We need to keep the quality of life as it impacts economic development and keeps our county attractive. This is an important topic and part of the Agenda but no need to be part of the Charter.

Should there be a need Congress or Forum for County Leadership to discuss major long-range planning? Yes. The EDP just went through a long-range planning review process with an outside company. The EDP has made a concerted effort to become more independent from the Economic Development Office. We continue to want to partner with them on the greater good for Charlotte County but there is also a need from other agencies in Charlotte County who need our partnership. We are expanding our mandate and becoming more autonomous from the EDO. One thing that came out of the study was the absence of a cohesive economic development plan for Charlotte County. We are in the very early stages of forming a Congress or Forum with all our elected bodies in this County that have an impact on this as well as stakeholders, to meet, talk and come up with a cohesive agreement on economic development in which everyone has ownership. EDP will be the facilitators and not dictators. We will have no Agenda going into it other than to get an answer from everyone that lines up. It will be tricky with Sunshine Laws, but we will pull it off. The result will be everyone knowing where we are going and agreeing on the direction with EDP monitoring the plan and updating the plan when needed. This does not need to be written into the Charter nor paid for by the County. EDP is volunteering for this role.

Should there be restrictions on the amounts of money raised for financing local campaigns? EDP does not have an opinion. No. That is freedom of expression.

Should there be a minimum age to serve in a local elected position? EDP does not have an opinion. No, I am fine with age 18.

Should the county via a referendum or commission vote have a say on any major changes to the airport management? (Currently state law prevails.) EDP does not have an opinion. No. The Airport Authority is there for a reason and changing the rules would be bad.

Should residency requirement to hold positions such as commissioner, sheriff, supervisor of elections be longer than the current six months? EDP does not have an opinion. When it happened previously it was a moot point as it was not enforced. If enforced, I might have an opinion.

Should voting for commissioner be restricted to residents within the district the commissioner represents? EDP does not have an opinion. I would be inclined to agree otherwise what is the point of having Districts? I was surprised to find out that we didn't have District voting but I do not have a strong opinion either way.

Are there any other changes to the County Home Charter that should be considered? EDP does not have an opinion. No, I do not have anything to add expect to remove an obstacle any electing officials might have to implement any policies or procedures they may want to enact.

End Interview:

g. 4:30 Interview with Danny Nix, Economic Development Partnership - President

Do you think we should introduce Term Limits in the Charter for our Commissioners? I think keeping our current commissioners in place is important for Charlotte County. I also believe that term limits are important in certain levels of government. I like them for the Federal and State level, and I haven't seen any abuse by our current commissioners to require it here. It is a difficult question to weigh in on for our local officials. Continuity is important to the growth of our community.

Do you think there should be fewer or more Commissioners on the Board of Commissioners? I think we have the perfect number of Commissioners currently and it is a good balance.

Should County Department Heads and members of Administration be required to be county residents? If housing wasn't an issue we could discuss. The 2019 study reflected that we need 1100 more houses to keep up with growth as well as 800 rentals and the cost of housing has also increased. This housing need might be detrimental in the hiring process of good, qualified candidates who cannot afford to move or find available housing in county. If housing wasn't an issue, I would say yes.

Should Constitutional Officers be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners or elected? Elected.

Should the County Administrator be appointed or elected? I like that the Commissioners get to appoint the three positions of Administrator, Attorney and Economic Development Director.

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? I am perfectly fine with the ten percent.

If 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 believe in the power of the people; I believe in our Constitution and that you should not change the Constitution. As a community I think we should have some say but I also do not want to alienate opportunities that come up. I would need more information to truly give my opinion.

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? Nothing stands out to me.

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 was appointed to be part of the focus group and I am proud to say we had a diverse population as well as different mindsets from all parts of the County. As we made decisions on the projects, we remained focused on making sure all parts of the community were touched. We made sure everything we recommended was beneficial and made sure we were using the funds correctly. I loved the process of seeing everyone working well together.

Should there be a continuing oversight advisory committee dedicated to this tax? I think we already have it in place. We have individuals who pay close attention. We are fortunate that our Commissioners listen to us and give us their thought process. We need to maintain good stewardship of these funds. If we look at how the funds have been handled since the beginning, I have not seen any misappropriation during my time.

Should there be a requirement for an Environment impact planning? We need to be very mindful of our environment, our water, wetlands, and other aspects of our community. I know the County is working toward this with the recent hire for water management, Brandon Moody. I would say No.

Is there be a need Congress or Forum for County Leadership to discuss major long-range planning? This is one of the initiatives of the Economic Development Partnership! Loud and proud! We want to bring the elected officials together to say what does economic development look like among all entities. Yes, 100 percent we need to do this.

Should there be restrictions on the amounts of money raised for financing local campaigns? No. I think people should be allowed to donate what they can afford. Look at Sarasota County. They have different ranges of monetary donations for different positions/seats that can be donated - \$100 or \$1000.

Should there be a minimum age to serve in a local elected position? The concern is what type of life experience does the person have to offer to progress the community in the right way. I don't want to hold anyone back if they can do the job but there needs to be a level of how do you know you can do the job?

Should the county via a referendum or commission vote have a say on any major changes to the airport management? (Currently state law prevails.) I would personally like to see a Commissioner on the Airport Authority. I do not think any change needs to be run by our Commissioners. The question is too vague to answer, not knowing what the change is.

Should residency requirement to hold positions such as commissioner, sheriff, supervisor of elections be longer than the current six months? No.

Should voting for commissioner be restricted to residents within the district the commissioner represents? No. Our system works. If we change, it needs to be for the right reason.

Are there any other changes to the County Home Charter that should be considered? No. We are blessed to live in an amazing community. Do we need some tweaking, sure, every business does, if the County was not run like a business, it would soon be broke. Real estate is thriving right now. I like the thoughtfulness in place to really engage in economic development from the larger scale while maintaining the charming, small community feel.

Any comments on water resources? Water is the life blood of our community. We must protect it. We need to figure out our septic to sewer issues which is not sexy and very expensive, but we need to protect our waterways. We need to continue to have people in place to monitor our nitrogen levels, how are they getting here with all the growth. We must look at our water basins, what kind of mapping and surveys are being done? Are we paying attention?

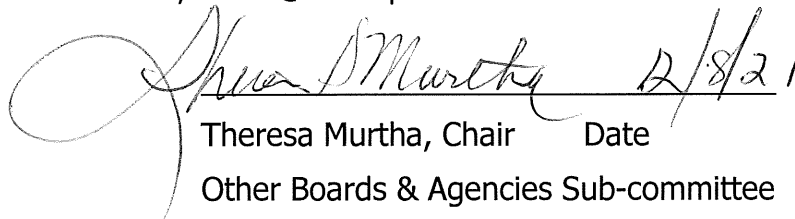
Is there anything related to the Airport where business development could be changed or improved? I want to see the land developed. There is 18,000 undeveloped acres that does not engage with the community other than individuals. **What is holding it up?** Housing needs. EDP is focused on how to help and is working with the Economic Development Office on this issue.

End Interview:

IV. Discussion:

V. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 4:55 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 11, 2021 @ 2:00 p.m.

 12/8/21
Theresa Murtha, Chair Date
Other Boards & Agencies Sub-committee