

Minutes for the City of Lansing Charter Commission

Regular Meeting | Tuesday, September 24, 2024, 6:30 PM

Tony Benavides City Council Chambers,
Lansing City Hall, 10th floor, 124 W. Michigan Ave.

Present: Commissioners Adams Simon, Anderson, Bauer, Boyd, Dowd, Jeffries, Lopez, Qawwee, Washington

Absent: none

Staff Present: City Clerk Swope, Deputy Clerk Drever

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jeffries at 6:30 PM.

Roll Call

Clerk Swope called the roll of the Commission. A quorum was present.

Adopt the Agenda

Moved by Commissioner Dowd to adopt the agenda as presented.

Motion Carried.

Approval of Minutes

A. Moved by Commissioner Boyd to approve the September 7, 2024, minutes as presented.

Motion Carried.

B. Moved by Commissioner Qawwee to approve the September 10, 2024, minutes as presented.

Motion Carried.

Public Comment

Michael Siracuse spoke about limiting the power of the Board of Water and Light.

Fred McLaughlin spoke about planning, zoning, and affordable housing.

Anna Martinez-Hume spoke about adding an ethical investment clause to the City Charter and drafting from a community perspective, not a template.

Officer Reports

Chair

No Report

Vice-Chair

No Report

Clerk

Clerk Swope provided a budget update for the Commission. He also acknowledged the written communications in the packet, and that the Commission is streaming on Facebook.

Presentations

A. CMDA

Kristen Rewa, from Cummings, McClorey, Davis, and Acho, PLC (CMDA) presented on the process of charter revisions, highlighting structure and scope of the document, the government, and the work.

New Business

A. Form of Government – Discussion

Commissioner Washington spoke in favor of a strong mayor form for checks and balances and accountability.

Commissioner Boyd spoke in favor of a strong mayor form for accountability.

Commissioner Qawwee spoke in favor of a strong mayor form of government.

Vice-Chair Adams Simon spoke in agreement with the previous commissioners, for reasons of accountability, leadership, and visibility.

Commissioner Dowd spoke in agreement with the previous commissioners and asked about ways to define the relationship between the mayor and city council.

Commissioner Anderson spoke about mayoral accountability and hearing that the people want more transparency in City leadership.

Commissioner Washington spoke about potential term limits for the mayor and council and that they don't always need to get along.

Commissioner Boyd spoke against term limits.

Commissioner Bauer spoke about how the people want the power to vote mayor in or out and that the mayor's executive staff should be people who understand governmental operations.

Commissioner Anderson asked Commissioner Boyd why she is against term limits.

Commissioner Boyd answered that the people are empowered to choose whom they want to fill an elective office.

Commissioner Lopez spoke about looking to other cities' forms of government. Then, he spoke about inserting language for general job description for the mayor and their chief of staff.

Commissioner Dowd spoke about defining the role of the mayor, specifically at City Council meetings and encouraging any counterpoints to be voiced.

Commissioner Washington expressed agreement about term limits relative to finishing tasks in office. Then, she spoke about defining department head jobs, bolstering the mayor's chief of staff position to eliminate the need for a deputy mayor.

Commissioner Qawwee spoke about anticipating community members in favor of a city manager form to express their views.

Commissioner Washington agreed with Commissioner Qawwee and emphasized the importance of City Council having a space distinctive from the mayor to conduct business.

The Commissioners discussed their plans for future decision making, including scheduling discussions about the make-up of the City Council, and the Board of Water and Light.

Public Comment

Fred McLaughlin spoke about envisioning a definition of our community.

Commissioner Remarks

Commissioner Anderson acknowledged those watching live on Facebook.

Commissioner Lopez spoke about an organizational chart for the City.

Chair Jeffries spoke about the attorney attending remotely.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by Chair Jeffries at 7:31 PM.