

**CITY OF FRIDLEY  
CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING  
MARCH 1, 2021**

---

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairperson Nelson called the Charter Commission meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

**ROLL CALL**

Members Present: Commissioners Gary Braam, Kelli Brillhart, Donald Findell, Manuel Granroos, Nikki Karnopp, Ted Kranz, Bruce Nelson, Rick Nelson, Courtney Rathke, Barb Reiland, Pam Reynolds, Val Rolstad, Cynthia Soule, and Avonna Starck

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Melissa Moore, Admin. Services Coord./Deputy City Clerk/Staff Liaison  
Dan Tienter, Finance Director/City Treasurer/City Clerk  
Councilmember-at-Large Ostwald  
Councilmember Eggert

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

MOTION by Commissioner Brillhart approving the meeting agenda. Seconded by Commissioner Reynolds.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON NELSON DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

1. Approval of February 1, 2021 Charter Commission Meeting Minutes

MOTION by Commissioner Reiland to approve the meeting minutes of February 1, 2021 as presented. Seconded by Commissioner Rolstad.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON NELSON DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

**ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS**

2. 2021 Reappointments

Chairperson Nelson confirmed that Commissioners Findell, Rolstad, and Soule wanted to renew their appointments.

MOTION by Commissioner Reynolds, to reappoint Commissioners Findell, Roldstad and Soule. Seconded by Commissioner Karnopp.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON NELSON DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

### 3. Election of Officers

Chairperson Nelson stated that the Nominating Committee submitted their proposed recommendations for Officer positions of Rick Nelson as Chairperson, Bruce Nelson as Vice Chairperson, and Nikki Karnopp as Secretary. He welcomed any further nominations from the floor.

Commissioner Brillhart thanked the Commission for allowing her to serve in a very easy year last year.

There were no further nominations.

MOTION by Commissioner Reynolds to appoint Rick Nelson as Chairperson, Bruce Nelson as Vice Chairperson and Nikki Karnopp as Secretary. Seconded by Commissioner Rolstad.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON NELSON DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

### 4. Format of Charter Commission Meetings

Melissa Moore, Admin. Services Coord./Deputy City Clerk/Staff Liaison, stated that the Commission asked staff to look into the Governor's Executive Order related to government meetings. She stated that government meetings are exempt according to the Order, but noted that building logistics hold the group back from hybrid meetings. She noted that the room being used tonight has scheduling conflicts going forward, as does the Council Chambers. She stated that the discussion would then be whether the Commission would like to meet virtually or choose a different meeting night.

Commissioner Brillhart asked if there are any rooms at City Hall that would be adequately sized for a group of this size.

Ms. Moore replied that there are not.

Commissioner Kranz asked if there are any Commissioners that would not be able to participate virtually.

There were no comments stating that Commissioners could not participate virtually.

MOTION by Commissioner Reiland to continue to hold meetings in a hybrid format. Seconded by Commissioner Rolstad.

Further discussion: Commissioner Reynolds commented that the hybrid format would be fine, but the Commission would need to change dates to do that.

Chairperson Nelson stated that he believed the motion was to hold fully virtual meetings.

Commissioner Reiland clarified that her motion was to continue to hold hybrid meetings. She asked how many of the dates would have conflicts.

Ms. Moore replied that the Fridley Fire Department has this room scheduled for the remainder of the year to conduct training.

Dan Tienter, Finance Director/City Treasurer/City Clerk commented that he would also not want to overlap with any City Council meeting dates.

Commissioner Karnopp asked if members of the Commission could be setup in different rooms with City laptops if they were unable to connect from home.

Ms. Moore confirmed that the City could most likely accommodate a few Commissioners if they did not have technical ability at their home.

Mr. Tienter replied that the inventory of laptops is relatively low, as is the number of conference rooms. He stated that perhaps one or two Commissioner could be accommodated.

Commissioner Kranz stated that he would like to make it as simple as possible as there are only two more meetings before the summer break and situations could change in the fall. He suggested that the Commission move to fully virtual meetings for the next two months.

Commissioner Soule stated that she does have an extra laptop and room available at her home, therefore she could accommodate one other Commission member if they do not have technology available at their home.

Commissioner Starck confirmed that she would support virtual meetings.

Chairperson Nelson asked if the motion maker and seconder would be willing to change their motion to conduct the next three meetings virtually.

Commissioner Reiland amended her motion as follows with support from Commissioner Rolstad:

AMENDED MOTION by Commissioner Reiland to continue to hold the next three meetings virtually and readdress the topic at the October meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Rolstad.

Mr. Tienter commented that it is possible that the emergency order and local declaration could be rescinded by October, but that issue could be addressed if circumstances change over the summer.

Commissioner Soule commented that the Officers would have the authority to make a change should the restrictions be rescinded.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON NELSON DECLARED THE AMENDED MOTION CARRIED.

5. Resignation of Commissioner Richard Johnson

Ms. Moore stated that at the last meeting she asked for direction on how the Commission would like to proceed with Commissioner Johnston as he had missed the last four meetings. She stated that after sending a letter to Commissioner Johnston, he did submit his letter of resignation which the group would now have to accept.

MOTION by Commissioner Rolstad to accept the resignation of Commissioner Richard Johnston. Seconded by Commissioner Braam.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON NELSON DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

Ms. Moore stated that she would also like authorization for staff to open the application process for the vacant position.

Commissioner Reynolds asked if there were any applications on file.

Ms. Moore replied that there was one application on file submitted six months ago.

MOTION by Commissioner Kranz to direct staff to open the application process for the vacant position on the Charter Commission. Seconded by Commissioner Reynolds.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON NELSON DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

**OLD BUSINESS**

6. Draft Chapter 12 Revisions

Mr. Tienter stated that two versions of the draft Chapter 12 were included in the Commission packet noting that one version showed the redline changes while the second version incorporates all the proposed changes. He stated that if the Commission is supportive of the changes, it could choose to forward those proposed changes. He referenced Section 12.04 and noted that staff and the City Attorney have concern with some of the proposed language, providing additional input. He noted that as proposed the language would prohibit staff or members of the Council from receiving gifts from anyone, even a gift from a friend or family member on their birthday. He suggested that at minimum the nature and giver of the gift be specified. He provided additional explanation on how the bulleting format can be confusing to understand and interpret.

Chairperson Nelson stated that the language has existed for more than 40 years and asked what brought forward the concern at this time.

Mr. Tienter replied that the language itself of this section is confusing and slightly different from State Statute as it does not identify the gift giver. He stated that the bulleted format also makes it more difficult to understand.

Commissioner Reiland recognized that it may not mirror the State language but she did not believe it was confusing.

Commissioner Starck stated that she could see how the language could create a situation where someone who does not like someone else could use the language against someone. She stated that it would only take one sour attitude to create a situation where there is nothing going on. She stated that she could pull the School District policy for comparison.

Mr. Tienter provided additional clarification from the City Attorney. He noted that it could be as simple as inserting the language "an interested party."

Commissioner Starck agreed that some type of qualifying language should be added.

Commissioner Findell stated that he also agreed with the previous formatting that did not use bulleting as that made more sense. He stated that he would support returning to the previous format as that was more understandable.

MOTION by Commissioner Findell to return to the original formatting for Section 12.04.

The motion died for lack of a second.

Commissioner Brillhart stated that the exception could also be moved to the beginning of the paragraph to make it more understandable. She stated that the periods could also be removed to make the exceptions apply to each item.

Mr. Tienter stated that staff would also suggest insertion of additional language, such as "interested person." He noted that is a defined term within City Code and State Statute.

MOTION by Commissioner Brillhart to move the exception language to the beginning of Section 12.04, remove the periods, and insert "interested party.". Seconded by Commissioner Findell.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON NELSON DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Tienter appreciated the diligence of the Commission in reviewing those issues to ensure everyone is comfortable with the proposed updates. He stated that if the Commission is comfortable, a motion could be made to prepare the document as directed by the Commission to insert the additional language and create a draft ordinance. He stated the Commission would review the draft ordinance at its next meeting.

MOTION by Commissioner Rolstad to direct staff to prepare the document as directed by the Commission to insert the additional language and create a draft ordinance. Seconded by Commissioner Braam.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, COMMISSIONERS BRAAM, BRILLHART, FINDELL, GRANROOS, KARNOPP, KRANZ, NELSON, NELSON, RATHKE, REILAND, ROLSTAD, SOULE AND STARCK VOTING AYE, COMMISSIONER REYNOLDS OPPOSED, CHAIRPERSON NELSON DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Commissioner Reynolds stated that the Commission has been discussing a training from the League of Minnesota Cities (League) and asked the purpose.

Mr. Tienter stated that originally the idea was proposed as there are new Commissioners and the League could provide some general information and training. He stated that there are no fees charged for the presentation. He stated that the League would provide general guidance on the powers of Charters and the process for amending and adopting amendments. He stated that the League does not opine on the things included in a Charter or any individual Charter. He believed that the presentation would provide helpful background information as an educational tool for the new Commissioners and serve as a reminder for experienced Commissioners. He stated that the Commission had talked about work planning after the completion of Chapter 12 and this presentation could help to provide education before moving into that next process.

Commissioner Kranz commented that he has served on the Commission for nearly 20 years and felt that he was led by others that had done a good job to help make suggestions to the City Council. He stated that in the last few years about half of the Commission has transitioned to newer members and he has been impressed with their knowledge. He commented that perhaps the presentation would be a good idea that could help to spark new ideas.

Commissioner Starck stated that the School Board goes through a similar process each year, having a trainer come in annually. She believed it would be a valuable use of time and using this educational tool proactively would be beneficial.

Commissioner Reiland stated that in her first year on the Commission, she often felt lost and agreed that this additional education would be helpful.

Chairperson Nelson agreed that he would support the training.

Commissioner Reynolds commented that the League is a lobby organization that actively lobbies against Charters and the Commission should be cautious of that when hearing the presentation.

Mr. Tienter confirmed the consensus of the Commission to invite the League in May to provide its presentation.

### **FUTURE MEETING TOPICS/COMMUNICATIONS**

Mr. Tienter stated the April meeting would include final consideration of the draft ordinance for Chapter 12. He stated the May meeting would include the League presentation. He stated the October meeting would be focused on strategic work planning efforts.

Commissioner Reynolds expressed concern with things in the Charter and the process for updating that involves ordinance. She stated that perhaps that should occur prior to the work planning.

Chairperson Nelson confirmed that could be part of the work planning process.

Mr. Tienter stated that input could be gathered from the entire Commission as to formatting and updates that have been recognized or brought forward in the past. He believed that both staff and the Commission would benefit from that planning process.

It was confirmed that potential interviews for the vacant position could be held during the April meeting.

Councilmember-at-Large Ostwald commented that there are vacancies on the Planning Commission and the Parks and Recreation Commission. He encouraged Commissioners to reach

out to anyone who would be interested in the positions, noting that the Council intends to hold interviews on March 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Commissioner Starck asked and received confirmation that the age requirement is 18 plus. She stated that she would be interested in knowing more about the different demographics of the Commissions along with the effort it would take to increase that diversity.

Chairperson Nelson recognized that age may be sensitive information, but staff could include the number of years someone has served.

Mr. Ostwald replied that the Community Engagement Specialist is working to develop such information.

Commissioner Starck stated this is an important decision and should not be rushed and commented that social media would be helpful in recruiting younger members and the Commission could reach out to younger members of the community.

Commissioner Braam commented that there is an applicant who was interested in the position and if there is someone interested, the position should be filled. He agreed that the Commission could work to develop a better method for recruitment in the future but did not want to overlook someone that was already interested in serving.

Chairperson Nelson stated that while he agrees that the Commission could use younger people, it would not be helpful to have someone serve for six months and then go away to college.

Commissioner Starck commented that it would not need to be a person that young, but there are a lot of young families in the community. She suggested that the Commission advertise for the position and delay the decision until May.

Commissioner Karnopp stated that she would also agree to delay the decision to May with the intent of widening the search.

Mr. Ostwald commented that the Council likes to fill vacancies on other Commissions as soon as possible because of the small number of members and issues with quorum that could present themselves. He commented that the Charter Commission is unique in that it has a larger number of members and would not have that problem.

Mr. Tienter commented that Statute states that the Commission must fill the vacant position within 60 days upon the declaration of such vacancy, therefore the maximum wait would be two months from tonight.

Commissioner Reynolds commented that when she joined there were only nine members.



Commissioner Starck suggested that the applicant on file should be invited to attend the April meeting and that the position be further advertised. She stated that the Commission could then think about recruitment and diversity as a bigger discussion moving forward.

Chairperson Nelson commented that perhaps it would be better for the City Council to discuss that in workshop and provide direction.

Mr. Tienter stated that the City has reached out to its Community Engagement Specialist to assist in that process. He noted that the Strategic Plan also includes many items focused on outreach and increasing diversity.

Commissioner Kranz stated that the application is open and there are no restrictions on who could apply.

Chairperson Nelson commented that if someone applies and there is an opening they should be considered. He noted that there will continue to be openings on the Commissions in the future as people's schedules and lifestyles change and that will create additional opportunities. He stated that Commissioners could continue to reach out to neighbors to increase interest from new residents.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

MOTION by Commissioner Kranz to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Soule.

UPON A VOICE VOTE, ALL VOTING AYE, CHAIRPERSON NELSON DECLARED THE MOTION CARRIED AND THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:27 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Commissioner Reiland, Charter Commission Secretary

Amanda Staple, Recording Secretary