

**Charter Review Commission  
Other Boards and Agencies  
Subcommittee Meeting  
August 3, 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.

**Roll Call:**

The following members were present:

Theresa Murtha, Chair  
Joyce Cream  
Adam Riley

Absent members:  
Colleen Palinksi-Ferrara

Citizens: None

**Call to Order:**

The meeting was called to order at 2:15 PM by Chairman Theresa Murtha.

**Agenda Items:**

- I. Citizens Input – None.
- II. Minutes from July 28, 2021 were approved by consensus.
- III. Old Business:
  - a. Review of upcoming interview schedule. The Committee added two new dates to accommodate possible requests for future interviews: October 5 and 11<sup>th</sup>, using the same times. The committee decided to add another group representing West County and/or Veteran Organizations. Joyce Cream will find the best candidate to interview for Veteran Organizations and report back.
  - b. The committee reviewed the questions to be asked and held open the possibility that a MSBU question may be added once clarification was reached as to why a question on MSBU's was included at the last Charter Review sub-committee. Joyce Cream was asked to read the interview questions to the guests. Follow up questions may be asked by the rest of the committee. At the end of the meeting the committee will review the questions asked and a revision if necessary, will be made for next meeting.
- IV. New Business:

**3:00 Interview with John Wright, President, Punta Gorda Chamber:**

John Wright opened with a statement concerning the Economic Development Office saying he and his Chamber Board fully support keeping this office outside of the Government (i.e., reporting to the County

Administrator) due to confidentiality issues, like tax incentives when recruiting new businesses to the community.

**Do you think we should introduce Term Limits in the Charter for our Legislators?**

Absolutely. Fresh blood, new people, new ideas and keeping the process energized.

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

No more than 7, maybe have 2 at large to reduce answers on issues such as "not my area".

**Should County Department Heads and members of Administration be required to be county residents?**

Yes.

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

Elected.

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

Appointed. Current system is perfect.

**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?**

Keep at 10 percent.

**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?**

No. If mandated by the State of Florida, we should accept it.

**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. Dave Gannon, Economic Development and his department is very pro-active and is doing a great job.

**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.**

Yes, every five-years with an annual review. Water Resources, for sure.

**Are there any other changes to the County Home Charter that should be considered?**

John Wright had several comments to convey over the recent passing of the One percent sale tax.

- Committee needs the freedom to overview the final choices.
- Selection process needs to change.
- Need to understand which projects fit within the county strategy.
- Issue with Lesser ranked projects get funded with leftover money.

(Tier One – Funds the major projects. Tier Two – in theory the extra funds go to these projects however the extra funds usually go to supplement increased costs from Tier One projects).

- Need an ongoing Advisory Board.

- Spokesperson from the Review Panel should be there to present to the BCC and give reasons why the projects were chosen.
- Something not working right in monitoring and spending.
- Needs to benefit all the County, not just percentagewise for different areas of the county.

**Punta Gorda City Council – Are there any issues such as Charlotte County geographic jurisdiction for water resources that might be addressed by the CRC?** Desalinization, Septic to Sewer needs to happen more quickly. Water quality “sells us”.

**Conservation Planning for the County?** Yes, since January 2021, the number one state new residents are coming from is California and the number two state is Texas. These new residents from other parts of the country will change the dynamic of our community.

Another issued raised was a desire for a Forum of some sort for Charlotte County Leaders to speak with other leaders of the county. Also, a need for one coordinator to set up individual meetings, (due to Sunshine Law, you can’t talk too all 5 Commissioners at same time in case they have to vote).

After the interview ended, the committee discussed the issues raised and decided to add these new questions to their list of Final Questions:

**New Questions to add:**

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?

Should there be a continuing oversight advisory committee dedicated to this tax?

Should there be a requirement for an Environment impact planning?

Should there be a need Congress or Forum for County Leadership to discuss major long-range planning?

**3:45 Interview with Doug Izzo, Director, Englewood Chamber**

Doug gave an opening statement thanking the committee for the opportunity to be part of this review. He stated he was familiar with process having recently gone through the process in St. Pete Beach where he was a Commissioner and Vice Mayor, and he is also a former Lobbyist of 12 years at the Federal and State level.

**Do you think we should introduce Term Limits in the Charter for our Legislators?**

No –that is what elections are for.

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

Interesting question. He feels we already have good representation but maybe an increase, however not sure of the statues or guidelines as he mentioned it is based on population.

**Should County Department Heads and members of Administration be required to be county residents?**

County Administrator should, but not as a requirement, (based on his personal experience). These people can do their jobs very well without living in the county. If required, it may hamper hiring qualified applicants.

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

**Should the County Administrator be appointed or elected?** Appointed. Typically done that way...overkill to elect county administrator since you already elect the Constitutional Officers and County Commissioners.

**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?**

Tough question; 10% seems low; would probably suggest an increase.

**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?**

This issue should be left to the State to decide – State of Florida works hard to keep Vegas style casinos out of state. Trust the State.

**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, Charlotte County is business friendly, and Florida State is also.

No recommendations for changes in Charlotte County unlike Sarasota County which has more red tape...garbage rates high, can't remove trees unless County approves it.

The committee asked whether the Economic Development Director should report to Administration or keep reporting to the Commissioners? While it is more work and time consuming to report to the Commissioners it is better and more transparent to report to BCC

**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. A Comprehensive Plan is long term, and you need some leeway to change. No specific items set in stone. Need to be more fluid. Should have planning for population growth, water resources and power. Concerned about the pipeline into Florida should a major disaster happen.

**Are there any other changes to the County Home Charter that should be considered?**

The Charter is "lean" which is good, also vague and fluid which is also good. Believe Florida is the best state there is – not much to change regarding state laws either.

Discussion of - 1% sales tax. As Doug is new to the area, not much was known about the process.

Once explained to him, he felt it a good idea to have an advisory committee to continue through the process – something they did in Pinellas County.

Long Range Planning – Resources for growth – agree – plan – where to get resources, especially water.

Same goes for power - living on a peninsula – one pipeline – damage from hurricane – different avenues the state is looking at.

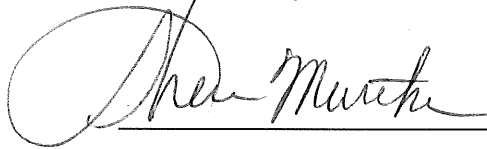
Sunshine Law – not effective doesn't solve the problem they think it does, hinders the public access to public officials.

Great job doing this review - Good to review every 6 years, paying attention to the citizens and wanting to update things.

No complaints about working within the County.

V. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned by consensus at 4:15 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for August 17, 2021 @ 2:00 p.m.



Theresa Murtha, Chair      Date

Other Boards & Agencies Sub-committee