

**Charter Review Commission
Other Boards and Agencies
Subcommittee Meeting
August 17, 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

Absent members:

Adam Riley

Member Colleen Palinksi-Ferrara resigned

Citizens: None

Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 3 PM by Chairman Theresa Murtha. Meeting delayed due to a cancellation of the first interviewee.

Agenda Items:

- I. Citizens Input – None.
- II. Minutes from August 3, 2021 - tabled
- III. Old Business:
 - a. None
- IV. New Business:

3:00 Interview with Gregory Murray, Punta Gorda City Manager

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

Any Charter Government is only as good as it's Charter. By the size of this County (190,000, which is a smaller county), it is difficult to find qualified candidates at this size and level who are interested in running for the position. Term limits at this size of county may be counterproductive – if a Commissioner is not doing their job their term limit is by voting them out.

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

Commissioners? For this size of county, five seems to be the right number of Commissioners. All areas can be well-represented by the five – 7 may be overbearing. Babcock may change this in the future – when you get up to 250,000 with a disparate population, this might indicate change at that time.

Should County Department Heads and members of Administration be required to be county residents? In bigger counties it is easy to say yes, it is different in this size of the county with the county line being so close. Administrator should be able to provide an exemption if necessary, it would not be bad for department heads to live in the county if there is an exemption – it is always good to live where you work.

Should Constitutional Officers be appointed by the Board of County Commissioners or elected? Elected are better than appointed. Very different area of expertise in each office. Conflict of interest if appointed and the Supervisor of Elections oversees the election of the person who appointed him.

Should the County Administrator be appointed or elected? If elected, need a whole other level of staffing with an Administrator to help run the day-to-day operations. Extra cost to the county and contention to a county not able to support it without changing the tax structure.

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 not an egregious number if you want to bring something like an ordinance or referendum for something that is felt strongly. 7% is not uncommon. Not so high if public cannot have a chance to have their say in what is happening. At the same time, you don't want to set it so low that county commissioners are dealing with frivolous issues that may cost the county substantial money and not be in the best interest of everyone.

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? Should you put an issue in the Charter that regulates a wide variety of entities? Once a rule is in the Charter it is a rule. If the State of Florida approves casinos and how it is approved, the county may not have a say in the matter. Like Indian lands. Many ways of citizen input in many other different avenues – public hearings, emails, phone calls. Putting public input/voting into the Charter would not change much as there is already so many ways to give input. Ultimate input is voting in an election. The Charter is not the place for something like this.

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?

Only if worded very generally that points specifically to Commissioners and Administrators are to support Business retention and attraction. The Commissioners set the tone for what they want to see to the Director of Economic Development – who is very collaborative with other agencies. Doesn't make sense that they should add business friendly wording and put it into the Charter.

Who do you think the Economic Development Director should report to - Administrator or Board of County Commissioners? Pros and cons to both. If it is not broke, why fix? Needs to be responsive to Administrator and Staff so they can move things forward. Should be seamless and avoid conflict. Economic Development Officer should be on same page as Board of County Commissioners. Dave Gammon is very collaborative and responsive to the needs to other elected officials in Punta Gorda and with the Airport Authority. Due to the Florida Sunshine Law, the Economic Development office is separate, can take in confidential information so it is free from the freedom of information requests for one year. Otherwise, this opens confidential business information to the Public. Dave Gammon has anonymity under the Commissioners to talk with these

potential businesses. He generally has an idea what Commissioners are willing to support after talking with them individually and can then bring it out publicly. Issues with Florida Sunshine Law not always helpful.

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.

Schedule and elements are two different issues. Florida State requires the Comprehensive Plan to be updated every 7 years and requires specific elements. The County could require more frequently and add an element like water resources, but the State regulates already very heavily. If the County adds water resources, the City will have to comply. Not sure of meaning in the Charter... and if Punta Gorda City is applicable if changed, would need more clarification. The problem is if the City must comply with anything that is in the county plan.

Future land use development is different in the County and City. Both must be consistent with State law or City must be in line with the county in every nuance.

Note: May need to review with our attorney the definition of additional elements:

Sec. 1.3 B Relation to municipal ordinances: "Municipal ordinances shall prevail over county ordinances to the extent of any conflict, except that county-wide ordinances relating to the following subjects shall prevail over municipal ordinances to the extent of any conflict: B. A county-wide comprehensive plan or county-wide elements of a county comprehensive plan and county-wide land development regulations as defined by Chapter 163, Part II, Florida Statutes, as the same may be amended by the Florida legislature."

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?

Representation on the committee is good and the rate proportion is good. 10% goes off the top to Punta Gorda. Need some weighting on City Dollars and need to have a final say in Punta Gorda projects. Board of County Commissioners can change order or delete projects. The funds can only be used on projects they approve. Parking deck # 1 on everyone's list but Board of County Commissioners cancelled at the last meeting. Another instance was the Old Punta Gorda Library which was estimated at \$500,000 to rehab into a history museum or other cultural venue. When it got to the Commissioners, it was estimated at a much higher number and not recommended. The Staff Liaison made the presentation to the Board and not anyone from the committee.

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

No oversight advisory committee is needed but the initial committee should have more teeth in the recommendation process.

Should there be a requirement for an Environment impact planning? Not uncommon. Fiscal vs. Environmental – environmental is pertinent and affects fiscal. Like a Fiscal impact that also includes environmental. **Section 2.2 I. Economic Impact Estimates for Ordinances.** Missing something about fiscal.

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

Each organization has a specialist that knows their vision and mission. Elected and non-elected persons that drive the organization forward in the best interests of their client. No need for a formal gathering. Getting together to consolidate goals and help to move an organization forward is always positive. I welcome opportunities to meet and talk together with others like the County Administrator, Hector Flores. A nice idea but does not need to be in the Charter. Elected Officials meeting in an official publicly noticed meeting might happen. I am working with Hector Flores on a meeting between Board of County Commissioners and Punta Gorda City Council. Fostering opportunities to share views is always good, but whose role is it?

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

Nothing for the Charter. Good for this size of community.

Thank you for this opportunity.

3:45 Interview with Stephen Dionisio, Superintendent of Charlotte County Schools

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

No.

Do you think there should be fewer or more Commissioners on the Board of Commissioners? It is good right where it is at.

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? Appointed. I believe this because I am linking this to my position. I make decisions that are not always popular and can't image making those decisions if worrying about a future vote or wondering how my answer will affect a vote. That is not an effective way to run an organization. Because of a potential conflict of interest, I would have to look at each individual position – some might make sense to be appointed or not.

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?

Stay the same.

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 – the community 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 lean on Economic Development Partnership. This group spearheads initiatives and we should lean on groups that do that. I have nothing specific to suggest.

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.

The Florida Statute says how often it should be done so nothing to precludes it from doing it more.

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 served on it as a representative of the School Board. I think a diverse representation of the group is the most important part of the process. Everyone comes with their own agenda. Amount of "citizen" representation is a bit underwhelming... one or two citizens may not be enough from each district to truly represent the area. In the "Official" make-up of the committee the Board of County Commissioner choose the citizens on the committee – some seem to be hand chosen to guide the discussion and may not have the best interests of the community. An Independent Group given to the Board of County Commissioners that they do not get to choose citizens might be a better choice.

School Board doesn't get a cut off the top like Punta Gorda and we are the largest employer in county. We must pitch our projects. This time it was the One Button Lock-Down –when the calvary comes. The School Board asked for 5 million – all for technology and not staffing. Ultimately, we needed 25 million but if we had asked for that amount, we probably would not have gotten any funds. Thankfully we did receive the funds and it is already installed and it is in our schools.

The Committee is hand chosen except for certain representation that is included each year, like the School Board. Those residents' chosen represented certain segments of the county – you might say it is pickleball vs. little league. People/citizens are chosen for certain wants that are desired to come forward. The 1% Sales tax initiative is very important to the community and it sad that it is hard to get participation.

Should there be a requirement for an Environment impact planning? Yes, very important.

Should there be a need Congress or Forum for County Leadership to discuss major long-range planning? Would be healthy. Administration Teams need to together to trouble shoot problems and ideas. Elected officials have other considerations and tend to get in the way of productive discussions. This idea would definitely benefit the community. Hector Flores and I talk more than I used to with County as we grew up together. Being forced into the room when you normally wouldn't be is sometimes healthy for the organization/community.

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

No, nothing jumped off the page, it makes sense. Just keep the County movement forward and positive for all residents. Sometimes this retirement community forgets the little ones. I'm happy being asked to come and speak and would have been disappointed if no representation from the Schools was asked to be interviewed. Sometimes you need the schools involved and sometimes you do not but keeping us in the loop is beneficial to us and the community.

Thank you.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for August 31, 2021 @ 2:00 p.m.

 9-13-21

Theresa Murtha, Chair Date

Other Boards & Agencies Sub-committee