

## Committee of the Whole

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Agency: Detroit Charter Review Commission

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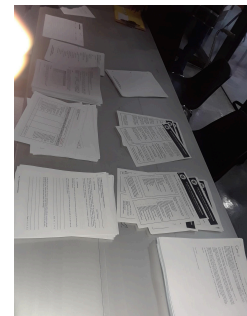
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I took the 5 bus from downtown and it took about 25 minutes to arrive at 7737 Kercheval, the Butzel Family Recreation Center, where the Detroit Charter Review Committee was holding a public meeting.

When I arrived around 5:30 PM, there were about 35 people milling about in various capacity - examiners, community members, media, etc. There was a plethora of handouts available at the sign-in table, including scratch paper for notetaking. By 6PM there were also hand sanitizers, pens and candy canes available.



I settled in and, recalling the last three+hour meeting with no food, I ate the dinner that I brought with me. Browsing the handouts, I was horrified to see the agenda continued onto the back of the page! A lady came around asking the seated audience if they'd like to have two minutes to speak. Although I was glad to see there were time limits, my fear that the meeting would last all night was not assuaged.

As the meeting was called to order just after 6PM, people were still coming in, including a man with a box of 28 variety chips and maybe 16 Nature Valley granola bars that he added to a table in the back with a case and a half of water bottles, still wrapped in plastic. A quorum was present. Commissioner JoAnna Underwood arrived around 6:15, and Commissioner Barbara Wynder was absent.



The first presentation was made by Lisa Franklin, with [Warriors on Wheels](#) (WOW), and other members of the Disability Focus Group, who advocated for an Office of Disabilities Affairs similar to the ones in 12 other major American cities including Philadelphia, Chicago, San Francisco and New York. It was also mentioned that “handicap” is a term that originated from European beggars, who collected the money that people handed to them in their caps. Jeffrey Nolish, policy director with [Detroit Disability Power](#) also presented goals for the Disability Office to include accessibility, advocacy, staff training, resources, grant writers, education, employment, infrastructure, housing, transportation, etc. And an estimated annual budget of \$2.97 million for the proposed Office of Disabilities Affairs.

The next presentation was by Bruce Simpson, the [City of Detroit Ombudsman](#), who gave a report describing [what the ombudsman does](#) for the people. Commissioner Karissa Holmes noted that it was a citizen focus group who recommended removal of the office, but that the Charter Commission is a champion of government oversight and does not recommend removing the Ombudsman office. Simpson noted that the Ombudsman does intend to submit changes to the language in the charter.



It seemed Commissioner Mack intended to interview both candidates for Parliamentarian at the meeting. There was a six-page handout with 18 questions and a scoring rubric so the audience could follow along. He said it should not take more than an hour. Luckily for us, Commissioner Nicole Small thought that was too lengthy and that the Personnel Committee should do a pre-interview, and bring them before the full committee with maybe five questions.

Commissioner Mack agreed to that. The Parliamentarian will serve in addition to Commissioners Wynder and Underwood.

By 7:15 the Officer and Committee reports begin and they move quickly along - many of them under the allotted 5-minutes.

Chair Report - welcome to the newest member, [Commissioner Denzel McCampbell](#).

Treasurer Report - Commissioner Small notes that the budget was submitted on time on Nov. 27th

No one discussed it, but there was a thick handout of emails to and from Tracy Peters, former Charter Review Commission Treasurer. The first email from Dec. 4, 2019 states that it is “in the interests of full transparency and smooth functioning of Commission Treasury business...”

The committees each gave short reports that included who the members of the committee were, when they last met, what they’re working on, and when they plan to meet again.

The Communications Committee created two handouts - one, an overview of the subcommittees and their functions; and two, community updates. The media presence and handouts are evidence of efforts to keep the community informed and engaged.

The Personnel Committee is in various stages of hiring the parliamentarian, a researcher and an administrative assistant. Commissioners and public would like to reopen the position listings and make sure there are plenty of candidates. They want to make sure there is not and does not appear to be corruption, nepotism or favoritism.

The Rules Committee discussed the Flight Plan, as we followed along on our handout. September 3, 2020 is the last date for “the community” to provide proposed changes to the Detroit Charter. April 25, 2020 is the proposed date for the convention - this date takes into consideration the necessary planning, the potential availability of the public, as well as the weather (an attempt to avoid a weather cancellation). The goal is an election on August 3, 2021.

FLIGHT PLAN TIMELINE PROPOSALS  
 Rules Committee  
 DRAFT Updated 11.27.19

Activity	Estimated Date of Activity Completion based date of General Election			RULES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION
	November 10, 2020	May 4, 2021	August 3, 2021	August 3, 2021
Undertake activities to produce a "Discussion Draft" of Charter Revisions.  The Commission will need to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review all revision recommendations - (Commissioner, Government, Citizen, Staff, Etc.)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subcommittee process will need to be identified and agreed upon</li> </ul> </li> <li>Allow for policy and legal research to be conducted regarding all proposed revision recommendations</li> <li>Allow for consultation with government stakeholders on implications of all proposed revision recommendations</li> <li>Review and discuss research and policy implications related to all proposed revision recommendations</li> <li>Commission will need to discuss for purposes of adopting or disposing of all proposed revision recommendations</li> <li>Allow for drafting language and further discussion regarding all adopted proposed revisions</li> </ul>	December 2019 – March 31, 2020	December 2019 – September 30, 2020	December 2019 – December 31, 2020	December 2019 - September 8, 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>August 1, 2020 - last date for the City departments to submit proposed changes for consideration</li> <li>September 3, 2020 - last date for Community to provide proposed changes and input for consideration</li> <li>September 8, 2020 - Commission will send all final approved charter revisions to General Counsel for drafting. (General counsel has indicated that he needs 4 days in order to create a "Discussion Draft" of the proposed revisions)</li> </ul>
Charter Convention (Proposed Date)				April 25, 2020 (4th Saturday in April)

The Rules Committee also put forth information about providing bus tickets for "the community" to get to and from the meetings. 250 four-hour bus tickets can be provided for \$500, money from the city charter, and not from the Charter Committee's budget (I was not clear about exactly where the money was coming from...apparently from somewhere else). All the commissioners present voted to buy 250 bus tickets. They agreed to hand the bus tickets out during the meeting. So, to myself I said, that provides transportation home from the meeting, but not really to the meeting. They will be keeping lists to track data, so I'm sure they'll figure that out and come up with a new plan for distribution.

At one point there were about 70-75 people in attendance. By 7:45 PM, about half that amount remained. During the entire meeting there was a small group of people having a conversation outside the doors near the sign-in table. They were talking in normal tones, even loudly, but with the clear glass doors to the auditorium closed, we could not hear them. During public comment, though, one person did ask that the sign-in table be moved a little bit further from the meeting



because they had a hard time hearing. That person was sitting near the doors, which kept opening and closing as people came and went all night. The Urban Information Network was there again, with audio/visual equipment set up, and a few times they did adjust the sounds - some people were hard to hear, even in the microphones.

Unfinished business was an informational update. The Charter Review Commission is planning to obtain a lease at the [DABO](#) office so that the community, commissioners, executive director and counsel can have office and meeting space on the West Side of Detroit. Commissioners hope to have a lease to approve at the January 14th meeting. I just now looked up DABO - it stands for Detroit Association of Black Organizations. I mention this because during public comment one person asked what a flight plan was, and asked the commissioners to take the time to explain some of the language and terms used during the meeting.

There was no new business to discuss, and so there were about 12-14 public commenters. Public Comment included several people in agreement about the need for an Office of Disabilities Affairs in Detroit, and one person pointed out there should be sign language at the meetings; two people mentioned food, bus tickets and other incentives for community attendance and participation; there were a few complaints about the websites having the wrong information for the meetings posted. At least three people claimed the websites still said the meetings were held at "kay mack," [CAYMC](#) (the Coleman A. Young Municipal Center); a representative from [Hydrate Detroit](#) wants everyone to know about the [uranium spill](#) on Nov. 26th, and that there is an [open meeting](#) of the [Detroit Water and Sewage Department](#) Board of Commissioners at 2pm on December 18th, and everyone should go file a grievance. There were mostly positive comments and inquiries. However, one commenter, activist Brenda Hill, was "not buying all this civility." She remained suspicious of the commissioners and their motives, admonishing "Call the Cops Weaver" for calling the police on meeting attendees (which amounts to attempted murder, according to Hill), apparently referencing [chaos at the June 22, 2019 Charter meeting](#).

The meeting was adjourned just after 8:30 p.m.

### Meeting Dates

Economic Development Committee - Dec. 12 @ 4pm Edison Detroit Public Library

District 4 Community Meeting - Dec. 17 @ 7pm Jemison Temple

Board of Water Commissioners - Dec. 18 @ 2pm, Water Board Building

Economic Development Committee - Jan. 9 @ 4pm Edison Detroit Public Library

**Charter Review Committee of the Whole - Jan. 14 @ 6pm, Northwest Activity Center**  
Charter Review Committee of the Whole - Jan. 25 @ 6pm, Roberto Clemente Rec Center



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