

# City of Fort Lauderdale

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## Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 21, 2024

11:30 AM

Joint Workshop with Charter Revision Board

NSU Art Museum - Horvitz Auditorium

1 E Las Olas Blvd, Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

### **CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP**

*FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION*

*DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor*

*STEVEN GLASSMAN Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District II*

*JOHN C. HERBST Commissioner - District I*

*PAM BEASLEY-PITTMAN Commissioner - District III*

*WARREN STURMAN Commissioner - District IV*

*SUSAN GRANT, Acting City Manager*

*DAVID R. SOLOMAN, City Clerk*

*THOMAS J. ANSBRO, City Attorney*

*PATRICK REILLY, City Auditor*

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Trantalis called the meeting to order at 11:49 a.m.

**ROLL CALL**

**Commission Members Present:** Commissioner Herbst, Vice Mayor Glassman, Commissioner Beasley-Pittman, Commissioner Sturman, and Mayor Trantalis

**Charter Revision Board (CRB) Present:** Chair Judith Stern, Vice Chair Christopher Fertig, Jacquelyn Scott, Richard Weiss

**Charter Revision Board Members Not Present:** Harrison GrandWilliams

**COMMISSION QUORUM ESTABLISHED**

**Also Present:** Acting City Manager Susan Grant, City Clerk David R. Soloman, City Attorney Thomas J. Ansbro, and City Auditor Patrick Reilly

**OLD/NEW BUSINESS****BUS-1** [24-0535](#)

Joint Workshop with the Charter Revision Board - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Chair Stern remarked on the thoroughness of Staff's Commission Agenda Memo (CAM). She discussed the CRB's efforts and transparency towards providing the community and Commission with its recommendations. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' questions regarding the date the CRB recommendations were submitted to the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations (CFLCA), Chair Stern said that a representative of CFLCA attended each CRB meeting.

Commissioner Sturman concurred and said he attended the last CFLCA meeting, during which the CRB recommendations were presented to them. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the process in prior years.

Vice Mayor Glassman commented on the CRB's February 2, 2023, Meeting Minutes that discussed CRB public meetings in each Commission District, followed by additional public meetings. Chair Stern said that information needed to be corrected and commented on the

public's access to watch the CRB meetings and the posted CRB meeting minutes.

Commissioner Herbst remarked on the CRB process and its work and concurred with CRB recommendations.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question, Chair Stern discussed the CRB's efforts and explained the expertise and involvement of CRB Member Richard Weiss.

Mr. Weiss provided an overview of his efforts and commented on critical Charter issues that need to be addressed before the upcoming election. He said this is the first CRB Report and expounded on related details. The CRB needs to address numerous conflicting areas of the Charter in the future. Due to the upcoming election deadlines, the CRB's work was cut short.

***A copy of the Report is part of the backup to this Agenda item.***

Chair Stern noted questions that arose throughout the process. The CRB solicited related input from a representative of Florida Atlantic University, the Broward County (County) Attorney's Office, and the Broward Office of the Inspector General regarding ethics issues and Charter inconsistencies with State Statutes and the County Charter. Chair Stern explained related information and cited examples. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding other types of municipal governments, such as a strong mayor and strong city manager forms of municipal government.

Mayor Trantalis noted that the City is part of a coalition of the ten (10) most populous cities in the State and discussed his perspective regarding the two (2) forms of municipal government. He discussed the opportunity to consider a strong mayor form of government. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Chair Stern said the CRB has no position on this topic, remarked on the CRB's role, and noted that the voters make those decisions.

Mayor Trantalis discussed his perspective in support of a strong mayor form of government and commented on his viewpoint regarding the Broward County Board of County Commissioners' annual appointment of the Broward County Mayor.

Commissioner Herbst remarked that a strong mayor form of government is a full-time position. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question, Chair Stern explained that the CRB does not sunset. The CRB will continue its work, and the Commission will choose which CRB recommendations will be included on the ballot.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, City Clerk David Soloman confirmed the June 10, 2024, 5:00 p.m. deadline for items to be included on the ballot.

Mr. Weiss explained that the CRB had yet to take a position on a strong mayor form of government and many other charter items because of the short timeframe required to place Charter revisions on the November ballot.

Mayor Trantalis remarked on his perspective regarding having had this Workshop earlier to discuss Charter revisions and obtain resident feedback before the deadline.

Vice Mayor Glassman discussed his prior requests for this Workshop, expounded on his perspective and related concerns.

Mayor Trantalis remarked that not all CRB recommendations are controversial and are clean-up items. Commissioner Beasley-Pittman recommended addressing those items. Vice Mayor Glassman concurred and remarked that other CRB items require community outreach and education.

Mr. Weiss outlined items included in the Report and Exhibit 1.

Mayor Trantalis discussed the need for further specificity regarding permanent residency for Commission candidates and expounded on his perspective, and cited examples.

Mr. Weiss discussed relying on State Statutes and case law. Mayor Trantalis remarked on obtaining feedback from the community regarding what constitutes permanent residency. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Chair Stern explained details regarding CRB resources and the involvement of the CFLCA and members of the public at CRB meetings.

Vice Mayor Glassman commented on the CRB recommendations related to the length of residency requirements and required age for Commission candidates. He remarked that only two (2) items listed in

correspondence from Deputy City Attorney D'Wayne Spence in 2023 were included in the CRB recommendations. Chair Stern confirmed that an individual can run for Commission office if eligible to vote. Vice Mayor Glassman noted the need for this to be addressed in the Charter. Further comment and discussion ensued.

CRB Member Christopher Fertig confirmed lengthy CRB discussions regarding defining permanent residency and noted the anticipation of a court's position due to multifaceted case law. There was a CRB consensus for the language to reflect permanent residency.

Mayor Trantalis suggested including a footnote to further define and inform potential candidates about eligibility. Commissioner Herbst remarked on his experience and discussed related details. Mayor Trantalis commented on the need to define the issue and provide context regarding residency in the Charter and expounded on his perspective. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mr. Weiss remarked on how a court could view information in a footnote related to residency. Commissioner Sturman remarked on language in a footnote stating that the wording, *...including but not limited to...* is what should be set forth in the Charter.

In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's question regarding the Office of the City Attorney's review of the CRB recommendations, City Attorney Thomas Ansbro confirmed the CRB recommendations have been thoroughly vetted and explained his Staff's involvement with the CRB and its recommendations. Senior Assistant City Attorney Paul Bangel worked with the CRB and reviewed their recommendations. Mayor Trantalis remarked on Senior Assistant City Attorney Bangel's attendance at CRB meetings. Mr. Weiss confirmed working with Senior Assistant City Attorney Bangel, who drafted the language in the Report. Chair Stern concurred and confirmed the process.

Mr. Weiss discussed other CRB recommendations, including the age of 18 for an elector and elector qualifications. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's questions, Mr. Weiss discussed language in other charters that allows its Commission to address elector qualifications and remarked on related concerns. The CRB consensus was to allow the courts to decide those issues. Mayor Trantalis concurred.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding the County's Election

Board qualifying electors, Mr. Weiss said it is an option.

In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's question regarding items included in 2023 Staff memorandums on this topic that are not included in the Report, Mr. Weiss reiterated the Report is a first round of CRB efforts and included hot-button issues. The intent of the CRB is to review the entire Charter. Vice Mayor Glassman expounded on his perspective regarding Staff's Charter recommendations to the CRB. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding the process, Staff correspondence to Commission Members, and the CRB receiving written Commission direction regarding Charter revisions. Mayor Trantalis acknowledged that the Commission did not correspond directly with the CRB regarding its Charter recommendations.

Vice Mayor Glassman expounded on his viewpoint regarding Staff communications to the Commission. Mr. Weiss reiterated the efforts of the CRB to address items of significance prior to the ballot submission deadline. Vice Mayor Glassman recommended that the CRB be provided with Staff recommendations for Charter items revisions.

In response to Vice Mayor Glassman's question, Mr. Weiss explained the driving force behind the CRB's consensus to address items in the Report, which include elections, referendums, qualifications, and the disposal of property. Mr. Weiss discussed related information.

Vice Mayor Glassman remarked on Staff input regarding Charter modifications of substance and items for cleanup. Further comment and discussion ensued. Mr. Weiss suggested that the Commission make a motion to communicate its recommendations to the CRB. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commission Members commented on their viewpoints, including the number of Commission absences allowed, allowing a convicted felon to vote or serve on a Commission, and the right to appeal. Mr. Weiss said CRB recommendations could be modified. Chair Stern remarked on related CRB research and recommendations. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mr. Weiss explained the CRB's efforts to address Charter organizational details. Mayor Trantalis reiterated his previous comment regarding utilizing the Broward County Canvassing Board to determine elector eligibility but noted the CRB recommendations address elector eligibility.

Mr. Weiss continued reviewing additional Report recommendations. Mayor Trantalis remarked that the scheduling of the Commission

Summer Break should remain as is, with a Commission Meeting in the first week of July and the third week of August. Mr. Weiss discussed the importance of Commission Meetings dovetailing with the swearing-in of elected Commission Members.

Commissioner Herbst remarked on his preference to revert to the previous Commission Summer Break schedule, resuming meetings in the first week of September. Mayor Trantalis commented on the need for an August meeting. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question regarding the swearing-in of elected officials, Chair Stern explained that the City was inconsistent with State Statutes and explained related research and input to the CRB requiring newly elected Commission Members to be sworn in within ten (10) days of the election certification and could be as soon as that day.

Commissioner Sturman remarked on his viewpoint regarding rushing to have a Commission Meeting. Mr. Weiss explained the CRB's goal to add specificity and cadence to the Charter on this subject.

Chair Stern remarked on Commission Meetings and a past petition drive and its presentation at a Conference Meeting versus a Regular Meeting in which the Commission could act.

Chair Stern noted different certification timelines for the March elections versus the November elections. November elections are certified within five (5) days. City Clerk Soloman confirmed that the Commission Meeting on November 5, 2024, was moved to Thursday, November 7, 2024. The Commission Members in office on November 4, 2024, would attend the November 7, 2024, Commission Meeting. The newly elected Commission Members will attend the Commission Meeting on November 19, 2024. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mr. Weiss explained the rewriting of Section 3.15 regarding the referendum process to clarify and ensure it is user-friendly. Mayor Trantalis summarized his understanding that ten (10) residents can put together a petition and submit it to the Commission. A petition on a ballot needs to be supported by one percent (1%) of registered voters. Further comment and discussion ensued.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's questions, Mr. Weiss confirmed that if the petition threshold is met, it is required to be put on a Commission Agenda for discussion and action. If the petition is voted down or the Commission takes no action, it goes on a ballot referendum

in the next election cycle. Should petitioners wish for a Special Election to consider the ballot referendum, petitioners would be responsible for the costs incurred. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Vice Mayor Glassman commented on the importance of this Section addressing a referendum and inquired about discussion and feedback from the CFLCA. He noted the importance of thoroughly vetting recommendations included in the Report. Further comment and discussion ensued regarding scheduling an additional Joint Workshop with the CRB on June 4, 2024, before the June 10, 2024, election ballot deadline.

Mayor Trantalis requested that public comments on this Workshop be submitted to the Commission.

Chair Stern discussed CRB efforts over multiple meetings and cited examples of the related process. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Mayor Trantalis recognized CRB Member Jacquelyn Scott. Ms. Scott read from a prepared statement regarding her perspective as a resident and her intention as a CRB Member to revise the Charter and not engage in political disputes. She remarked on concerns about lobbyists serving on advisory boards and explained related information. Ms. Scott recommended significant public outreach, education, and feedback before the Commission making Charter revisions and expounded on her perspective.

City Attorney Ansbro commented on input from Senior Assistant City Attorney Bangel regarding the timeline and process. To meet the June 10, 2024, deadline, at the next Commission Meeting, a Resolution needs to be adopted to place Charter questions on the ballot. The ballot questions would need to be adopted by two (2) readings of an Ordinance. City Attorney Ansbro expounded on related information.

Vice Mayor Glassman remarked on his perspective regarding the urgency of this subject and the need to thoroughly vet Charter revisions.

Commissioner Sturman remarked on his viewpoint regarding time-sensitive items.

Chair Stern discussed the transparency of the CRB public meetings and explained related information.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's questions, Mr. Fertig explained



his viewpoint on public input for portions of CRB recommendations versus all sixty-five (65) to seventy (70) recommended Charter updates. Commissioner Herbst concurred and cited examples, recommending four (4) to five (5) Charter recommendations be placed on the ballot. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Commissioner Herbst remarked on challenges related to engaging the public on Charter issues and explained his perspective. Vice Mayor Glassman said it is incumbent upon the City to hold related Town Hall Meetings and charrettes.

In response to Commissioner Sturman's question, City Attorney Ansbro explained the need for the Commission to choose four (4) or five (5) ballot questions at tonight's Regular Meeting. Further comment and discussion ensued. Mayor Trantalis commented on the ability of Commission Members to place a Walk-On Agenda item on tonight's Agenda related to this subject and expounded on his viewpoint.

In response to Chair Stern's question, City Attorney Ansbro reiterated that any conforming of the Charter to State law must adhere to the process and be addressed tonight to meet the June 10, 2024, deadline.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 1:28 p.m.