

State of Texas

County of Brazoria

City of Freeport

BE IT REMEMBERED, that the Charter Review Commission met on Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 5:30P.M., at the Freeport City Hall, Conference Room, 1201 North Avenue H, Freeport, TX for the purpose of considering the following agenda items:

Charter Review Members: Sam Reyna
Lila Diehl
Theodore Baker
Douglas Domingues

City Council Liaison: Jarvis Davis, Councilman Ward B (Not Present)
City Manager: Lance Petty
City Attorney: David Olson, Interim (Via Phone)
City Secretary: Clarisa Fernandez
Staff: Crystal Ruiz
Visitors: Nicole Mireles, Ruben Renobato, Flora Green

Call to Order.

Chairperson Sam Reyna opened the meeting at 5:30 pm.

Consideration and possible action approving Charter Review meeting minutes from January 15, 2025.

A motion was made by Theodore Baker to approve Charter Review meeting minutes from January 15, 2025, seconded by Lila Diehl with all present and voting “Aye” 4-0. The Charter Review Commission unanimously approved the motion.

Discuss and review Charter Articles 3-4.

The Charter Review Commission discussed amending the term limits for Council members. They debated changing it from two three-year terms back to three two-year terms.

A motion was made by Douglas Domingues to amend Section 3.01(b) and 3.02(d) to change the term limits back to three two-year terms, seconded by Lila Diehl with all present and voting "Aye" 3-1. Theodore Baker voted "Nay".

Interim City Attorney David Olson said he would draft language reflecting these changes for review at the next meeting.

Theodore Baker said the second paragraph of Section 3.05 should be deleted. Mr. Olson said Section 3.05 was redundant with Section 3.06 and should be deleted it is unnecessary and outdated.

A motion was made by Theodore Baker to remove the second paragraph of Section 3.05, seconded by Douglas Domingues with all present and voting "Aye" 4-0. The Charter Review Commission unanimously approved the motion.

Interim City Attorney David Olson talked about Section 3.09 regarding the existing provision that permits two council members to call a special meeting. This sometimes leads to a situation where a quorum is not present to conduct the meeting effectively. Currently, if two council members request a special meeting, it may proceed without the presence of enough members for official business, which can result in an inability to hold the meeting. Mr. Olson proposed a change to the rules, suggesting that three members should be required to call a special meeting to ensure a quorum is present. This would mean that while the Mayor could still call a meeting independently, if Council members were calling a meeting, it would require three of them to do so. This change would align with practical needs, ensuring that meetings called can actually proceed without further negotiation or cancellations due to lack of quorum. The Charter Review Commission engaged in a discussion about the potential benefits and drawbacks of this proposal. Some members suggested that having three members involved would provide a better representation of Council interests and ensure that meetings are meaningful and actionable. The commission decided not to make an immediate decision on the matter and agreed to revisit the issue at a future meeting.

Theodore Baker suggested requiring proposed ordinances to be posted on the City website in addition to the newspaper. This suggestion was made due to concerns that many citizens do not read the newspaper, and they might miss the opportunity to provide input on new ordinances. The idea was to ensure that the community is aware of proposed changes before they are enacted. Mr. Olson clarified that state law already requires newspaper publication for ordinances with penalties, and explained that ordinances are posted on the city website after they are adopted. He further noted that the legal posting in the newspaper occurs only after the Council adopts an ordinance and is not meant as a pre-adoption notice. The City does not currently post proposed ordinances pre-adoption on the website, as no special notice beyond the usual agenda posting is required by law. The Charter Review Commission decided not to make any changes to the current section.

Chairperson Sam Reyna proposed adopting an ordinance to sanction the Councilman for being late to meetings. Lila Diehl pointed out that the only action that could be taken would be to reduce his pay. Interim City Attorney David Olson explained that the Charter Review Commission can set qualifications for Council members through the charter, with those changes subject to public vote. He added that the Charter already specifies that members cannot miss a certain number of meetings without excused absences, and missing more than that in a given calendar year without approval from the Council would be a violation. He further noted that any changes would require voter approval, which would then override any self-regulation or qualifications set by the Council.

City Manager Lance Petty recommended specifying bond amounts for certain positions in the charter, previous City Managers were only bonded at \$10,000, which was low for today's standards. He suggested setting \$200,000 bonds for both the City manager and Finance director to ensure the City is protected in case of mistakes. Mr. Petty explained that he and the finance director already have \$200,000 bonds, which he enforced upon taking his position for the City's protection. Interim City Attorney David Olson expressed some concern about fixing dollar amounts in the charter, noting that it could require future adjustments if monetary standards change. He suggested that the charter could set a minimum bond amount, while allowing the City Council to adjust it upward if needed. Mr. Petty agreed, emphasizing the importance of both positions being bonded adequately to cover potential financial discrepancies, essentially providing a total \$400,000 coverage. Mr. Olson agreed to draft language for the next meeting that would set a minimum \$200,000 bond for the City Manager and Finance Director positions, with the City Council holding the discretion to increase these amounts as necessary.


Interim City Attorney David Olson stated that staff would compile notes from the meeting and prepare materials for review well in advance of the next meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for April 16 at 5:30 PM, where Articles 5 and 6 would be discussed.

Adjourn

On a motion by Lila Diehl, seconded by Theodore Baker, with all present voting "Aye", the meeting adjourned at 6:17P.M.



Chairperson Sam Reyna
Charter Review Committee



Secretary Theodore Baker
Charter Review Committee