



Agenda Report

TO: CITY COUNCIL
FROM: CHARTER REFORM TASK FORCE
RE: STATUS REPORT ON CHARTER REFORM

DATE: December 15, 1997

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council extend the deadline for the Charter Reform Task Force to present its recommendations to City Council, from February 1998 to June 1, 1998.

BACKGROUND:

Since its establishment, the Task Force has held six meetings, each on an alternate Thursday evening since the end of September. The first meeting was devoted essentially to initial organizational matters, the members getting to know each other, and preliminary discussions of the nature of the charge from the City Council. At four other meetings, there were presentations to the Task Force focusing on specific issues or previously distributed reference materials relating to municipal governance. The speakers, the topics they covered, and the order in which they made their presentations were as follows:

1. Larry Newberry, Assistant City Attorney: A variety of legal issues relating to both municipal governance and school board organization
2. Carolyn Garner, City Reference Librarian: History of the Pasadena City Charter and its revisions
3. Charles McKenney, member of former Charter Task Forces: The most recent (1988) effort at City Charter revision
4. Steven Frates, Ph.D., Rose Institute of State and Local Governments: Different generic municipal government organizational structures and their implications
5. Donald McIntyre, former Pasadena City Manager: Advantages of the Council/City Manager form of government, as well as responsibilities for an elected (city-wide) mayor with limited powers
6. James Ingram, III, Instructor of Political Science, San Diego State University: Advantages of the "strong" mayor form of government

As a part of the initial work plan, there were two objectives for those sessions. The first was to give the Task Force members an opportunity to hear a variety of informed points of view on key matters with which they would have to deal. The second was to enable the members to further educate themselves through follow-up discussions among themselves and with the speakers. Mayor Bob Bartlett of Monrovia is scheduled to make a presentation to the Task Force on December 18 reflecting on his experience as both a city council-elected mayor and as a mayor elected (at-large) directly by the voters of a city.

Initial Work Plan

One of the meetings (the fourth to be held) was devoted almost exclusively to formulating a work plan. At that meeting, and with a mind to attempting to complete its work within the time frame set by the City Council, it was decided that the Task Force would hold four more meetings at which there would be presentations on, and discussions of, both city governance issues and the manner by which the Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education is a creature of the City Charter and whether the current structure and method of election should be changed. The matter of City Council compensation would be considered in conjunction with the broader issue of the form of City governance. It was also decided that no preliminary recommendations would be made by the Task Force at the conclusion of that phase.

The Task Force then planned to hold at least two community-wide forums devoted exclusively to obtaining the broadest possible input from citizens on matters they believe relate to the form of City government and the School Board. At those meetings, members of the community would have an opportunity to state their view and concerns on any matters relating to City governance and the School Board. The forums would also be an opportunity for citizens to make any specific recommendations to the Task Force. A Task Force ad hoc work group is currently formulating a program for the community forums.

The third and final phase would be a series of Task Force meetings at which there would be deliberations on specific proposals and alternatives for City governance and the School Board organization. They would culminate in votes by the Task Force on specific recommendations to be submitted to the City Council.

Work Plan Revision

After six meetings, it has become manifest that if the Task Force is to give adequate consideration to the complex issues it was asked to consider and if it is to make sound recommendations with the potential for significant and long-term impacts on the City, additional time for deliberations will be necessary. The matter of time required to complete its work was the object of lengthy discussion at the Task Force's December 4 meeting. At the end of that discussion, the 16 members present voted unanimously to request an extension of its schedule to June 1, 1998.

If the City Council approves an extension, the Task Force will adopt at its December 18 meeting a new work plan that will culminate in recommendations to the City Council not later than June 1. That plan will include provisions for the community forums, adequate deliberations on specific issues, and the preparation of its recommendations.

FISCAL IMPACT:

On September 24, 1997, City Council authorized an appropriation of \$20,000 from the City Manager's Discretionary Reserve Fund for the Charter Reform Task Force to conduct approximately 12 meetings (through February 1998). To date, the Task Force has expended \$5,780 in conducting six meetings. It is anticipated that this extension may cost up to an additional \$5,000; however, since the Task Force has expended less than the amount originally estimated and budgeted, no additional funds are being requested at this time. If it is later determined that additional funds are needed, staff will return to City Council and request additional funds. Costs for the City Clerk and Assistant City Attorney to provide staff support are absorbed within the two departments. In addition, a Web page linked to Pasadena's Home Page (www.ci.pasadena.ca.us) has been established with Task Force agendas and minutes and an e-mail account (charter-reform@ci.pasadena.ca.us) for the public to submit written comments electronically has also been established. The minimal costs for the Web page and e-mail account are being absorbed within the City Clerk's budget.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ross Selvidge', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ross Selvidge, Chair
Charter Reform Task Force