



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**MEETING MINUTES  
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE  
CHARTER REVISION BOARD  
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2023 – 5:30 P.M.**

**Cumulative Attendance  
January-December 2023**

Judith Stern, Chair	P	1	0
Christopher Fertig, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Cushla Talbot Paulino	P	1	0
Ben Sorensen	A	1	0
Richard Weiss	P	1	0

**Staff**

Junia J. Robinson, Assistant Neighbor Support Manager, MPA  
Greg Chavarria, City Manager  
Anthony Fajardo, Assistant City Manager  
Paul Bangel, Assistant City Attorney  
David Solomon, City Clerk  
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor  
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

**Communications to City Commission**

None.

**I. CALL TO ORDER / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Staff Liaison Junia Robinson called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

**II. DETERMINATION OF QUORUM**

It was noted a quorum was present at the meeting.

The following Item was taken out of order on the Agenda.

**IV. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 4, 2018 MEETING MINUTES**

City Clerk David Solomon recalled that the October 15, 2018 meeting was a joint workshop with the City Commission, for which the Commission has already approved the minutes.

As the Board has only recently received the October 4, 2018 minutes, it was suggested that the Item be deferred so the members would have sufficient time to review them.

**Motion** made by Mr. Fertig, seconded by Ms. Paulino, to defer. [The **motion** passed by consent.]

### **III. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

**Motion** made by Mr. Weiss, seconded by Mr. Fertig, to nominate Judy Stern for Chair.

**Motion** made by Mr. Weiss, seconded by Ms. Paulino, to nominate Mr. Fertig as Vice Chair.

In a voice vote, Ms. Stern and Mr. Fertig were elected Chair and Vice Chair respectively.

### **V. BALLOT SUBMITTAL REQUIREMENTS**

Chair Stern recommended that the Board invite Government Affairs and Economic Development Manager Daphnee Sainvil to coordinate with them, as it is not yet known what changes to election dates and laws might be made during the upcoming Florida Legislative Session in Tallahassee. She suggested this Item be deferred until more information is available.

**Motion** made by Vice Chair Fertig, seconded by Mr. Weiss, to defer. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

### **VI. CHARTER REVISION DISCUSSION**

Chair Stern recalled that in the past, the Board divided review of the Charter by sections, based upon each member's expertise.

Chair Stern also noted that the full Charter has not been revised since the 1980s, and there may be inconsistencies in the City's Charter and Ordinances that are not currently consistent with state law. There have also been changes in municipal law as well. She also emphasized the importance of public input.

Vice Chair Fertig observed that during the previous Charter review process, there were public meetings in each City Commission District, followed by a central meeting. Chair Stern also recalled that the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations was also invited to the Charter Review Board (CRB) meetings to provide input.

Chair Stern continued that due to his expertise, Mr. Weiss may be able to provide input beyond what the City can give. She also recommended that after approximately three months, the Board hold a joint workshop with the City Commission.

Mr. Weiss commented that he was not clear on what the City Commission would like the Board to look into, or how comprehensive they expect review of the Charter to be. Chair Stern replied that the Board is an independent body that can accept recommendations, but is not bound by them.

Mr. Weiss advised that there are certain provisions of the City's Charter which conflict with state law, and asked that the City Attorney's Office identify these provisions and recommend changes. He added that sections or provisions within the Charter that conflict with one another should also be identified. These two steps would provide the Board with a starting point.

Assistant City Attorney Paul Bangel advised that there is also a special act that applies to Broward County municipalities, and the Charter should be reviewed for conflict with this act as well.

Mr. Weiss stated that he would also like the City Attorney's Office to identify portions of the Charter that they feel require clarification.

Vice Chair Fertig agreed with the proposed review of the Charter's ambiguity, particularly in relation to the recent election and its outcomes. He continued that there are also topics of public interest, such as a Charter Amendment that would offer greater protection for public lands and ensure that they are used for public purposes. He also recommended a look at political contributions. Vice Chair Fertig concluded that the public should also be encouraged to bring forward areas of concern at CRB meetings.

Mr. Weiss asked if the Chair planned to review the Charter section by section and hear input on each section as it is discussed. Chair Stern replied that tonight's meeting is intended to be introductory, and noted that the upcoming Florida Legislative Session is likely to include laws that may affect what the Board is asked to consider. She requested again that the Board be kept apprised of what is going on during this session, such as changes in public lands, procurement, elections, and other key issues, and concluded that the Board can divide sections of the Charter among themselves for review at their March 2023 meeting.

Mr. Weiss recalled that previous Charters on which he has worked, including the Miami-Dade Charter, have addressed the use of public lands, and suggested that these documents be provided to Vice Chair Fertig for review.

City Manager Greg Chavarria observed that revisions to the Charter will ultimately guide the City Commission to provide better government. Mr. Weiss commented that some Charters empower City government as much as possible, while others provide protections that limit the powers of governing bodies. He recommended that at the next meeting, the Board discuss how they wish the City's Charter to affect the City Commission.

The Board briefly discussed key issues they would like to address, including public lands, which the Commission has asked the CRB to review in the past. Other issues of importance included City elections and the role of the Charter as a Constitution for the City. Chair Stern recommended that the members review previous meeting minutes to become informed on what the Board wished to achieve in the past. There was also brief discussion of election law and the costs related to elections.

## **VII. PUBLIC INPUT**

None.

Chair Stern requested that a Board member represent the CRB at the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations so that entity is aware they are invited to provide input to the Board.

It was noted that the next Board meeting will be held on Thursday, March 2, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:05 p.m.

Any written public comments made 48 hours prior to the meeting regarding items discussed during the proceedings have been attached hereto.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]