

Report on City of Tucson Charter Review Committee Meeting, August 14, 2014.
Compiled by Ruth Beeker for TRRG

The COT Charter Review Committee held its initial meeting August 14, 2014, 2-4 P.M. at Mayor and Council Chambers. City Clerk Roger Randolph chaired the meeting. Twelve of the fourteen appointed citizens were present to begin their deliberations and to hear from advisor Raphael Sonenshein who was hired to assist them in their mission to make recommendations for City Charter changes.

Key points:

The Committee will be making recommendations to Mayor and Council (M/C). It is Mayor and Council who will make the final determination of which, if any, proposed changes will go to the voters.

Mayor and Council will need to get the Committee's recommendations by June since measures to be on the November 2015 ballot need to be identified by July. It is likely that M/C will want to hold public hearings prior to making those decisions.

The Committee set themselves a tentative deadline of April 1 to ensure themselves adequate time to meet the City deadlines and refine their recommendations.

The Committee will elect its officers at their third meeting, giving themselves time to get acquainted.

The Committee will make decisions by voting rather than seeking consensus. The advisor cautioned them that moving items forward which have close votes could be suicidal, but also asked them not to be afraid to change their opinions as more discussion occurs.

Charter revisions can be multi-faceted. Structure and/or content can change and language can be updated to increase readability. The latter task will be done behind the scenes; committee time will not be wasted on that. The advisor will provide the committee input as needed, provide a look at comparable cities' charters if the committee wishes and assist them in identifying what priorities they might have. Members are encouraged to send any materials they want to share with the entire group to Roger ahead of time. Staff can distribute materials with no violation of the Open Meeting laws.

The Committee will likely meet monthly until 2015; then it may need to meet more frequently.

The Committee wishes to engage the community throughout the process. This may include some version of public hearings or town halls. It definitely will include two 10 minute call-to-the-audience opportunities at each meeting, one near the beginning of the meeting and one later. Speakers will be limited to 3 minutes.

The next meeting of the Charter Review Committee will be Monday, September 15, 2014, 4:00-7:00 P.M. in Mayor and Council Chambers. During that meeting, the group, with the help of their advisor, will lay out a calendar for the entire procedure.