KANSAS CITY
MISSOURI

2023 Charter Review Commission

Charter Section 1212 provides, "The Mayor shall appoint a Charter Review Commission no less than once every ten years for the purpose of reviewing the terms and operation of the City Charter. The Commission may make recommendations to the Mayor and City Council for amendments to the City Charter or may recommend no changes."

Charter Review Commission Team

Members

- Jack Steadman, At-Large (Co-Chair)
- Karen Slaughter, Third District (Co-Chair)
- Eric Rose, First District
- Jenny Johnston, Second District
- Wilson Vance, Fourth District
- Linda Brown, Fifth District
- Michael McGee, Sixth District
- Margaret Jones, At-Large
- Adam Miller, At-Large

City Staff Support

- Mayor's Office
- Law Department
- City Communications
- City Clerk's Office
- Finance Department

Public Engagement

Three Public Listening Sessions

- Northland Neighborhoods Inc. (5340 NE Chouteau Trafficway, Kansas City, MO 64119)
- Southeast Community Center (4201 E 63rd St, Kansas City, MO 64130)
- Gregg/Klice Community Center (1600 E 17th Terrace, Kansas City, MO 64108)

Regular Weekly Meetings in 10th Floor Committee Room at City Hall

Additional Engagement

- Maintained KCMO.gov/Charter website with briefing materials, draft redlines, and comment box

- Received public comment via Clerk's Office public.testiomony@kcmo.org address

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Overview of recommendations

- Centralize filing locations and randomize ballot order

- Standardizing petition thresholds

- Declaring any candidate receiving 2/3rds of the vote in the primary as elected without a general election

- Providing additional structure for future Charter Review Commissions

Issues suggested for further study: number of districts, voter education efforts, ranked-choice voting

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Centralized Filing System and Random Ballot Order

CURRENT STATE

- Nomination petitions may be filed with the City Clerk *and* local election authorities

- Ballot order determined by submission order

RECOMMENDATION

- Centralize filing nomination petitions with the City Clerk

- Establish random ballot ordering after petitions are received

- Mirror this process for recall petitions

Impacted Sections of the Charter: 602, 721, 722, 731, 732

Standardizing Petition Thresholds

CURRENT STATE

- Number of required signatures is set as a percentage of votes cast in last Mayoral election:
  - 5% for initiative petitions
  - 10% for referendum petitions
  - 20% for recall petitions

RECOMMENDATION

- Number of required signatures is set as EITHER a percentage of votes cast in last Mayoral election OR the following static thresholds, whichever is higher:
  - 4,000 for initiative petitions
  - 7,000 for referendum petitions
  - 18,000 for Mayor and At-Large recall
  - 3,000 for In-District Recall
- Increase recall percentage threshold to 25% of votes cast in last Mayoral election

Impacted Sections of the Charter: 701, 710, 721

Voting Methods Update

CURRENT STATE

- Primary and general elections, with top two advancing to general from primary, regardless of how large a majority of votes any candidate receives

RECOMMENDATION

- Any candidate receiving at least 2/3rds of votes cast shall be declared elected and shall not have a general election

- Races in which no candidate received at least 2/3rds of votes cast would move to a runoff in the general election

- Write-ins remain permissible in the primary election

Impacted Sections of the Charter: 605 and 204

Charter Review Commission Guidelines

CURRENT STATE

- Commission shall be appointed to review terms and operations of the City Charter

RECOMMENDATION

- Establish number of Commissioners, minimum length of time to convene, require public meetings in each Council district and at least two weekend meetings, and that the City Clerk shall maintain a copy of Commission's report or correspondence

Impacted Section of the Charter: 1212

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Additional Recommendations That Do Not Require Charter Revisions

- Specialized study of Council Districts and composition of At-Large Council seats
- Increased efforts to drive voter education and outreach, including engaging youth and creating nonpartisan Ballot Information Booklet
- Continued study and public engagement regarding possibility of adopting Ranked Choice Voting method