



City of Gahanna

200 S. Hamilton Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

Meeting Minutes

Charter Review

*Ethan Barnhardt, Chair
Carrin Wester, Vice Chair
Jamie Belisle
Edward A. Hill, Jr.
Richard Maxwell
Raymond J. Mularski
Karen Reynolds*

Jeremy A. VanMeter, Clerk of Council

Thursday, June 4, 2026

6:30 PM

Council Chambers, City Hall

A. CALL TO ORDER: Pledge of Allegiance & Roll Call.

Chair Ethan Barnhardt called the Regular Meeting of the Gahanna Charter Review Commission to order on Thursday, June 4, 2026, at 6:31 p.m. and led members in the Pledge of Allegiance. The agenda was published on Monday, June 1, 2026.

Present 6 - Ethan Barnhardt, Jamie Belisle, Edward A. Hill Jr., Richard Maxwell, Raymond J. Mularski, and Karen Reynolds

Absent 1 - Carrin Wester

B. ADDITIONS OR CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA.

None.

C. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES.

[2026-0116](#)

Charter Review Commission Special Minutes 2026-05-14

[2026-0117](#)

Charter Review Commission Minutes 2026-05-21

A motion was made by Maxwell, seconded by Reynolds, that the Minutes for May 14, 2026 and May 21, 2026, be Approved. The motion carried by the following vote:

Yes: 6 - Barnhardt, Belisle, Hill, Maxwell, Mularski and Reynolds

Absent: 1 - Wester

D. PUBLIC COMMENT.

None.

E. UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

[2026-0050](#)

Draft Charter Amendment Proposals for Charter Review Commission 2026

Chair Barnhardt clarified that the Commission was continuing its review of proposed charter amendment language drafted by City Attorney Tamarasan rather than conducting a proposal inventory review. He stated that he expected the discussion to finalize the remaining language revisions and position the Commission to take formal action at its final scheduled meeting on June 18, 2026. He noted that he had previously anticipated the possibility of an additional meeting but believed the Commission had made sufficient progress to complete its revisions and move forward with final consideration at the next meeting. Chair Barnhardt then turned the discussion over to City Attorney Tamarasan to provide an overview of the revisions incorporated since the Commission's last discussion. He advised commissioners that they could ask questions, offer suggestions, and discuss any additional amendments that had been updated since the previous meeting.

Scrivener's Error and Ward Composition Discussion

City Attorney Tamarasan reviewed the draft document titled "Item 40. Proposed Article Exhibit Draft 5.28.2026." She explained that, on page one, she had corrected a scrivener's error by removing the word "is" from the proposed charter language and had revised the rationale to include a reference to reducing significant unnecessary costs, reflecting the Commission's prior discussion. Moving to page ten regarding ward composition and terms, City Attorney Tamarasan reported that she had incorporated language proposed by Vice Chair Wester at the previous meeting. She noted that Vice Chair Wester had also submitted additional language by email and opened the matter for discussion.

Chair Barnhardt invited comments regarding Vice Chair Wester's email and stated that he viewed the message as containing additional thoughts following the previous meeting rather than proposing substantive changes.

Commissioner Maxwell stated that he believed Vice Chair Wester was attempting to further refine and clarify the language.

Commissioner Hill asked for City Attorney Tamilarasan's opinion regarding the proposed addition of "registered voters" in parentheses within the language concerning disparities in ward populations. He questioned whether the proposed wording created ambiguity as to whether a disparity would need to exist in both population and registered voters or in either measure individually. City Attorney Tamilarasan stated that the Commission's prior consensus had been to shift the focus from registered voters to population in order to align with practices used in other jurisdictions and to better support ward balancing. She explained that adding "registered voters" in parentheses would create unnecessary ambiguity and confusion. She further stated that the charter should not be drafted to mirror the code and that the code should instead be amended to conform to the charter if the amendment passed. She recommended leaving the language as originally proposed and advised that reintroducing "registered voters" would move the Commission away from the direction established during earlier discussions. Commissioner Hill agreed with City Attorney Tamilarasan's assessment and thanked her for the clarification.

Chair Barnhardt agreed that the code should follow the charter rather than the charter conforming to existing code language. He stated that he supported leaving the language as drafted with the expectation that the code would be updated if the amendment passed.

Commissioner Mularski stated that the phrase "20% or more" and "more than 20%" carried the same meaning. He added that if the Commission intended to use population as the basis for equalization, the language should reference only population rather than both population and registered voters.

Commissioner Maxwell agreed and stated that attempting to clarify the language by adding "registered voters" had made the provision more confusing.

Chair Barnhardt observed that a significant disparity in population would likely correspond with a similar disparity in registered voters and therefore viewed the additional language as duplicative.

Commissioner Reynolds asked whether the Commission generally agreed with City Attorney Tamilarasan's revised draft language.

Commissioner Maxwell responded that the language should remain as drafted. Commissioner Reynolds indicated her agreement.

Chair Barnhardt then suggested revising the rationale language rather than the amendment text itself. He stated that the existing rationale more closely reflected the original proposal and suggested language explaining that the purpose of the amendment was to shift ward boundary equalization from a registered voter basis to a resident population basis using federal decennial census data and establishing criteria for when ward boundaries may be adjusted.

Commissioner Belisle asked whether the rationale should mention that population-based ward balancing aligns with the approach used by most other jurisdictions. Chair Barnhardt asked whether such a statement should be included in the rationale. Commissioner Hill responded that he did not believe it was necessary and suggested that including such language could invite broader discussion regarding the rationale for multiple amendments. He stated that the Commission could rely on its understanding of the issue while focusing the rationale on clarity.

Commissioner Maxwell asked whether the Commission had formally decided to adopt the amendment. Chair Barnhardt clarified that the Commission was only refining language during the current meeting and would not take votes until its final meeting. Commissioner Maxwell stated that he would not be present for the final meeting, and Commissioner Belisle indicated that she would also be absent. Chair Barnhardt noted that both commissioners would need to provide their thoughts before the final vote and suggested that the Commission could discuss alternative meeting dates later in the meeting. Commissioner Mularski asked whether a 3-3 tie vote with only six commissioners present would result in failure of a proposal. City Attorney Tamilarasan confirmed that a proposal would fail in that circumstance because it would require an affirmative majority vote to pass.

Commissioner Reynolds suggested incorporating the concept of balancing into the rationale language. She stated that balancing based on population, as determined by the federal census, better reflected the intent to keep ward boundaries aligned with changes occurring within the city. City Attorney Tamilarasan summarized the discussion

and proposed revised rationale language stating that the purpose of the amendment was to shift ward boundary equalization from a registered voter basis to a resident population basis by using federal decennial census data and providing criteria for when balancing or rebalancing became necessary. Commissioner Reynolds expressed concern with the phrase “the purpose of the change is to shift,” stating that it implied the change was already occurring rather than relying on future census data to inform any balancing decisions. She suggested that the language should reflect that future data would guide the process. City Attorney Tamarasan proposed alternative wording stating that the purpose of the change was to inform ward boundary equalization using a resident population basis rather than a registered voter basis. Commissioner Mularski suggested replacing the word “shift” with “inform” and later proposed using the word “form” instead. Commissioner Belisle stated that “form” created the same concern as “shift” because it implied that a change was already taking place. Chair Barnhardt proposed revised rationale language stating that the purpose of the amendment was to adjust the ward boundary equalization process from a registered voter basis to a resident population basis by utilizing federal decennial census data and establishing criteria for when ward boundaries might need to be balanced.

Commissioner Maxwell asked whether the term “decennial” could be replaced with “10-year” for greater clarity. Chair Barnhardt agreed that using “10-year census data” would make the language easier to understand.

At the request of City Attorney Tamarasan, Chair Barnhardt repeated the proposed concluding language, stating that the amendment would establish criteria for when ward boundaries might need to be balanced. Commissioner Reynolds asked Chair Barnhardt to provide the revised language to City Attorney Tamarasan so that she would not need to recreate it. Chair Barnhardt agreed. City Attorney Tamarasan asked whether the Commission had any additional comments on the proposal. Hearing none, she moved to the next amendment.

Legislative Procedure

City Attorney Tamarasan reviewed the proposed amendment

regarding legislative procedure on page 12. She explained that the Commission had decided to retain the language in the first paragraph. As a result, she removed the explanation associated with the previously proposed redlined language. She stated that the only remaining redline pertained to the addition of due process language located on page 14 and that the accompanying explanation had been revised to remove discussion of changes that the Commission had not advanced. Chair Barnhardt stated that he believed the amendment and explanation were satisfactory.

Planning Commission

City Attorney Tamarasan moved to the next redline, which addressed the Planning Commission language on page 31. She explained that the draft inserted language after “its own rules of operation,” including attendance requirements. She stated that she removed the previously proposed language requiring attendance at 75% of all regular and special meetings because the Charter Review Commission wanted to defer that decision to the Planning Commission. She stated that she revised the rationale to explain that the purpose of the change was to remove the current fixed numbered absence threshold and allow the Planning Commission to determine equitable attendance requirements. Commissioner Maxwell stated that the revision looked good. City Attorney Tamarasan asked whether commissioners had any additional thoughts on the item.

Commissioner Belisle stated that she had considered adding “including but not limited to,” but she questioned whether that wording worked because the provision was not a list. City Attorney Tamarasan stated that either approach would be appropriate if the Commission wanted to add that language. Commissioner Belisle stated that she would defer to the rest of the Commission. Commissioner Mularski stated that “including but not limited to” would keep the language more open. Chair Barnhardt stated that the provision substantially delegated rulemaking authority to the Planning Commission. Commissioner Mularski noted that the Planning Commission would establish its own rules of operation. Commissioner Mularski questioned why the language needed to include attendance requirements if the Commission used broader language. Commissioner Belisle agreed that this was her concern. Commissioner Mularski stated that the language appeared because

the Commission had specifically removed attendance requirements, but questioned whether it remained necessary. City Attorney Tamarasan stated that the Commission did not need the language and could keep the same rationale while striking the attendance-requirements phrase. Commissioner Belisle stated that the Commission could keep the phrase if it added clarity, but she viewed it as unnecessary or leading. Commissioner Hill stated that he supported striking the phrase. Commissioner Mularski also supported striking the language as unnecessary. City Attorney Tamarasan stated that her only concern was ensuring that the Planning Commission would set some type of attendance requirements, but she agreed that the Commission could leave that decision to the Planning Commission. Commissioner Mularski stated that if the Planning Commission chose not to have attendance requirements, that decision would belong to that body. Chair Barnhardt stated that political pressure would likely encourage the Planning Commission to establish appropriate rules of operation, and a committee member could raise the issue if problems arose. City Attorney Tamarasan stated that her office staffed the Planning Commission and could also raise the issue. Chair Barnhardt stated that sufficient mechanisms existed to encourage the Planning Commission to move in the right direction. City Attorney Tamarasan stated that she would strike the language.

City Attorney Tamarasan then moved to the next redline on page 32 and stated that the only change involved the rationale. She explained that she added language stating that the consolidation allowed the Planning Commission, as a public body composed of subject matter experts that met regularly, to consider all matters involving zoning, building, and landscaping appeals. She added that, on further review, she wanted to include variances in the rationale because the Planning Commission already handled variances. She stated that she wanted to make clear that the amendment neither limited nor expanded the Planning Commission's scope.

Commissioner Mularski asked City Attorney Tamarasan to identify the change again. City Attorney Tamarasan stated that she had added the second sentence of the rationale to better explain the prior discussion.

Chair Barnhardt stated that the current rationale did not clearly explain that the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals' authority would

transfer to the Planning Commission. He suggested revised language stating that the purpose of the change was to repeal the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals and transfer its powers and duties to the Planning Commission. He further stated that appeals would continue through the Planning Commission or the courts as provided by Ohio law, and that the change intended to consolidate related functions within a single public body that regularly considered zoning, building, and landscaping matters. Commissioner Belisle stated that she liked this proposed language. Commissioner Reynolds asked whether the wording should refer to “matters” or “appeals.” City Attorney Tamilarasan explained that the Planning Commission handled zoning variances separately from building and landscaping appeals. She stated that the Planning Commission determined zoning variances initially and would consider building and landscaping appeals under the proposed change. Chair Barnhardt stated that he wanted voters to understand clearly that the responsibilities would not disappear. He stated that the Commission had previously discussed the need to make that point clear and that the rationale should state that the authority would transfer. City Attorney Tamilarasan stated that she liked the language and asked Chair Barnhardt to send it to her so she could double-check the scope. Chair Barnhardt agreed.

Commissioner Maxwell stated that the most important point was ensuring that the Commission did not lose any responsibilities.

Commissioner Reynolds asked whether this change would reduce costs because the Board of Zoning and Building Appeals was a paid position. City Attorney Tamilarasan stated that the Commission could include that point. Chair Barnhardt agreed that the rationale could reference cost reduction. Commissioner Reynolds stated that the savings might not be significant. City Attorney Tamilarasan stated that the amendment would still reduce administrative costs. Commissioner Maxwell agreed.

Commissioner Mularski asked whether the addition meant that the Planning Commission would receive appeals from city officials and would not hear its own appeals. City Attorney Tamilarasan stated that it would not hear its own appeals. Commissioner Mularski stated that he had read the language that way and wanted to confirm that understanding.

Charter Review Commission Convening Interval

City Attorney Tamarasan reviewed the amendment on page 37 and stated that the only revision involved the rationale section. She explained that she had added language stating that the amendment would minimize constant fluctuation and preserve the integrity of the charter.

Commissioner Mularski asked why Section 22.02 appeared in blue text. City Attorney Tamarasan explained that the blue text resulted from a hyperlink that appeared when she copied and pasted the language from the code. She stated that she would remove all hyperlinks before issuing the official report.

Chair Barnhardt stated that he had drafted alternative rationale language because he did not believe the phrase “constant fluctuation” read smoothly. He proposed language stating that the purpose of the amendment was to modify the mandatory Charter Review Commission convening cycle by extending the interval from five years to ten years in order to reduce the frequency of charter revisions and promote long-term stability in the City’s foundational governing document.

Commissioner Hill suggested adding the phrase “also known as the charter” to the end of the statement. Chair Barnhardt agreed with the addition.

City Attorney Tamarasan asked Chair Barnhardt to send her the revised language. Chair Barnhardt agreed to do so. Commissioner Mularski requested that Chair Barnhardt send the revised language to all commissioners.

Commissioner Belisle stated that she liked the phrase “preserve the integrity of the charter.” Chair Barnhardt responded that if the Commission wished to retain that phrase, he could send his draft language to City Attorney Tamarasan and trusted that she could incorporate the preferred wording. City Attorney Tamarasan confirmed that she could do so.

Non-Discrimination Statement and Protected Classes

City Attorney Tamilarasan reviewed the proposed amendment on pages 38 and 39 concerning protected classes and anti-discrimination language. She explained that she had incorporated language discussed during previous meetings and revised the list of protected categories. She stated that questions had arisen regarding whether language taken from the City's website reflected the City's official Equal Employment Opportunity statement. After further review, she determined that the website language did not represent the official statement and noted that the City had corrected the website accordingly. City Attorney Tamilarasan explained that the employee handbook contained different language that provided additional explanations and definitions of protected categories. She stated that those definitions became overly detailed for inclusion in the Charter. Instead, she aligned the proposed language with the City's existing codified protections found in the housing and criminal codes. She noted that those codes contained a specific list of protected classes followed by the phrase "or any status protected by applicable federal, state, or local law." She stated that this approach would encompass all intended protections while remaining consistent with existing City code.

Commissioner Hill asked whether the Commission could reduce repetition between the protected-class lists appearing on pages 38 and 39. He proposed consolidating the language into a single provision stating that no appointed or elected official, nor any classified or unclassified employee of the City, could discriminate against any person in the discharge of official duties or use protected statuses as a basis to limit the use or availability of public resources. He suggested using a single enumerated list of protected statuses followed by the phrase "or any other status protected by applicable law." City Attorney Tamilarasan stated that she liked the idea of consolidation because the second paragraph only prohibited using protected classes as a basis for limiting access to public resources. She stated that combining the concepts into a single section with one enumerated list could accomplish the same purpose.

Commissioner Mularski stated that the two paragraphs addressed separate issues and should remain separate. He emphasized that the provisions prohibited different actions and believed the distinction warranted separate treatment. Chair Barnhardt asked what legal benefit existed in separating the provisions rather than consolidating

them. Commissioner Belisle responded that maintaining separate provisions could provide greater clarity. She stated that duplication could help readers understand that the Charter addressed two distinct issues, although she did not hold a strong opinion and understood both viewpoints. Commissioner Reynolds stated that, as a non-lawyer, she preferred the consolidated approach. She questioned whether consolidation would make the Charter less restrictive while still remaining informative. Commissioner Mularski replied that the language would still impose restrictions but in different areas. He stated that the provisions should remain separate even if the Commission used similar language in both sections because they addressed different subjects.

Commissioner Hill sought clarification regarding whether the conjunction “nor” adequately connected the two concepts within his proposed consolidated language. He reread the proposed wording and explained that his intent was to prohibit discrimination both in the discharge of official duties and in access to public resources.

Commissioner Maxwell stated that the proposed language appeared to tie the two concepts together and believed it accomplished that objective. Commissioner Belisle initially misunderstood Commissioner Hill’s proposal but, after further discussion, realized that he intended to replace both paragraphs with a single provision. She acknowledged that understanding and reconsidered her earlier position.

Commissioner Maxwell asked whether the proposed language effectively combined the restrictions on discrimination and public resource access into one provision. He stated that the consolidated version appeared easier to understand and less repetitive.

Commissioner Belisle stated that she would withdraw her earlier objection after gaining a better understanding of the proposal.

Commissioner Mularski stated that reading the language aloud helped clarify the relationship between the concepts and requested additional time to review the proposal before reaching a final conclusion. Chair Barnhardt stated that consolidating the paragraphs would likely be more efficient as long as the language preserved the intent and content of both provisions. Commissioner Mularski stated that he still preferred two separate paragraphs because separate provisions emphasized that the Charter prohibited two distinct actions. However, he acknowledged that the consolidated language likely provided the same legal protections and requested an opportunity to review the language further before making a final decision.

Clerk VanMeter offered to display the proposed language on the screen for review. After reviewing the language, commissioners discussed several grammatical revisions. Commissioner Belisle observed that the phrase “applicable law” already appeared earlier in the provision and believed the omission of repeated references to federal, state, and local law did not create a problem. City Attorney Tamilarasan reviewed the wording and noted that several grammatical adjustments remained necessary. Commissioner Belisle expressed concern that the placement of the phrase “in the discharge of their official duties” could create ambiguity regarding whether it modified the employee or the person experiencing discrimination. City Attorney Tamilarasan agreed and stated that relocating the phrase would resolve the issue. Commissioner Mularski clarified that the language should clearly indicate that officials and employees, rather than the individuals affected, acted in the discharge of official duties. City Attorney Tamilarasan agreed and stated that the phrase should move earlier in the sentence. Commissioner Mularski stated that he liked the consolidated approach after reviewing the revised wording. Clerk VanMeter asked where the revised phrase should appear within the sentence. Commissioner Belisle suggested placing the phrase immediately after the reference to applicable federal, state, and local laws. City Attorney Tamilarasan suggested placing the phrase after the word “shall.” Commissioner Belisle proposed revised wording stating that, in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws, and in the discharge of official duties, no appointed or elected official, nor any classified or unclassified employee of the City of Gahanna, shall discriminate against any person. Chair Barnhardt stated that he supported the revised language. Commissioner Maxwell noted that the sentence would still need language prohibiting the use of protected statuses as a basis for limiting access to public resources. Commissioner Belisle expressed satisfaction with the revised wording. City Attorney Tamilarasan asked Clerk VanMeter to send her the revised language and requested clarification regarding its placement within the document. Clerk VanMeter and City Attorney Tamilarasan confirmed where the revisions should appear and discussed adding a comma after the phrase “official duties.” Chair Barnhardt remarked that the collaborative effort had produced a workable solution and commented that teamwork had helped improve the language.

City Attorney Section

City Attorney Tamilarasan reviewed the final proposed revision concerning the City Attorney section on page 28. She explained that Chair Barnhardt and Vice Chair Wester had asked questions regarding her proposed redline, which would remove language requiring the City Attorney to receive direction from Council by resolution or ordinance before defending certain individuals. City Attorney Tamilarasan explained that the Charter identified the City Attorney as the legal adviser and counsel for the City, its officers, and its departments. She noted that the Charter used the terms “officers” and “employees” interchangeably and that the provision therefore applied broadly to City officials and employees. She stated that the existing language created an internal inconsistency because it suggested that the City Attorney could not represent an individual employee who faced litigation arising from the course of employment without specific Council authorization. She further explained that the language could create complications by allowing Council to determine whom the City Attorney could or could not defend. She expressed concern that this arrangement could become problematic during disagreements between Council and the administration. She noted that, historically, City Attorneys had represented individual officials and employees when litigation arose from their employment because those individuals acted as representatives of the City. She stated that she had reviewed records in Legistar and found no resolutions or ordinances authorizing the City Attorney to defend specific individuals. City Attorney Tamilarasan stated that she did not believe removing the language would create problems because the Charter already limited representation to matters arising out of or in the course of employment with the City. She explained that the provision would not apply to criminal conduct occurring outside the scope of employment or to willful criminal acts unrelated to an employee’s official duties.

City Attorney Tamilarasan also summarized her review of other municipal charters. She stated that Columbus addressed the issue through ordinance rather than charter language and authorized the City Attorney to defend officers and employees in suits arising from their employment. She noted that the Columbus code also addressed conflicts of interest and reimbursement for special counsel. She explained that Reynoldsburg’s charter simply directed the City Attorney to defend and represent the City without additional language

regarding employees. She further stated that Whitehall's charter mirrored Gahanna's current language by requiring Council authorization before the City Attorney could represent individuals. City Attorney Tamarasan stated that she would defer to the Commission's preference. She explained that retaining the existing language would not materially affect her duties, although she believed it created internal inconsistencies and would likely require her to seek Council authorization whenever questions arose. She recommended striking the language but stated that she did not feel strongly enough about the issue to insist upon the change.

Commissioner Mularski stated that the existing language shifted decision-making authority regarding legal representation from the City Attorney to City Council. He stated that determining which cases warranted representation fell within the City Attorney's professional responsibilities and that Council should not exercise that authority. He expressed support for striking the language. Commissioner Hill stated that he concurred.

Commissioner Belisle asked for clarification regarding the charter provisions in Columbus and Reynoldsburg. City Attorney Tamarasan explained that both charters generally directed the City Attorney to defend the City and did not specifically address representation of employees. She noted that the Columbus charter contained language nearly identical to Gahanna's provision describing the City Attorney as legal adviser and counsel for the City and its officers and departments, while additional details regarding employee representation appeared in Columbus City Code rather than the charter. Commissioner Belisle then asked whether the language directing the City Attorney to defend City officials and employees in such suits should use the word "shall" or "may." City Attorney Tamarasan stated that she believed the word "shall" was appropriate. She explained that representing officials and employees in matters arising from their employment constituted a duty of the City Attorney unless a conflict of interest existed. She noted that Attorney General opinions, ethical rules, and other legal requirements governed situations involving conflicts.

Commissioner Mularski confirmed that the discussion concerned matters arising in the course of employment, and City Attorney Tamarasan agreed.

Commissioner Belisle thanked City Attorney Tamilarasan for the clarification and stated that she supported striking the language as proposed.

City Attorney Tamilarasan stated that the discussion concluded her review of the proposed revisions.

Chair Barnhardt thanked City Attorney Tamilarasan for her review of the revisions and asked whether commissioners had any additional thoughts, changes, or discussion regarding the proposed amendments. There was no further discussion.

Final Meeting and Report to Council

Chair Barnhardt noted that several commissioners might be unavailable for the June 18 meeting and led a discussion regarding the possibility of scheduling an additional meeting to ensure full participation during final voting. Commissioners concluded that June 8 at 6:30 p.m. was an agreeable date, pending Vice Chair Wester's availability, meeting room availability, and public notice requirements. Clerk VanMeter sent an emailed meeting invitation, which was accepted by Vice Chair Wester during discussion, and June 8 at 6:30 p.m. was confirmed. Chair Barnhardt explained that after the meeting on June 8, he would present the Commission's recommendations to Council at the July 6 Committee of the Whole meeting. He encouraged all Commissioners to attend if possible. City Attorney Tamilarasan agreed to share draft ballot measures and reminded Commissioners not to reply to group distribution emails in accordance with the Open Meetings Act.

F. NEW BUSINESS.

None.

G. CORRESPONDENCE AND ACTIONS.

[2026-0061](#)

Charter Review Commission Correspondence Received via Clerk

None.

H. POLL MEMBERS FOR COMMENT.

Commissioner Belisle remarked that the meeting felt empty without

Vice Chair Wester's presence.

Chair Barnhardt agreed that Vice Chair Wester's absence had been noticeable. He then encouraged commissioners to spend time reflecting on the proposed amendments before the final vote. He stated that the Commission's responsibility was not to determine whether each amendment was perfect or predict how voters might respond, but rather to determine whether each amendment improved the Charter sufficiently to justify presenting it to the voters of Gahanna. He emphasized the importance of the Commission's responsibility in deciding which amendments to recommend for the ballot and encouraged commissioners to consider each proposal through that lens before returning for final decisions.

Commissioner Belisle asked whether the Commission intended to discuss and vote on each amendment individually. Chair Barnhardt confirmed that the Commission would allow final discussion and then vote each proposal up or down.

Commissioner Mularski stated that he wanted commissioners to consider ballot fatigue during their deliberations. He reported that combining the seven department-related amendments into one issue and the four Board of Zoning and Building Appeals amendments into another issue would still leave fourteen ballot issues, while leaving each amendment separate would result in twenty-five issues. He noted that voters would already face approximately forty pages of material and cautioned that too many ballot issues could discourage voters from reviewing all proposed changes. He suggested that commissioners consider whether certain amendments, particularly those involving only grammatical revisions, warranted placement on the ballot. Commissioner Belisle asked Commissioner Mularski whether he recalled how many charter amendments had appeared on previous ballots. Commissioner Mularski stated that previous charter reviews appeared to average between six and ten ballot issues, with one review including approximately twelve issues, although he noted that he would need to verify those figures.

Commissioner Hill stated that he appreciated Chair Barnhardt's comments regarding the Commission's role. He emphasized that commissioners were not voting for themselves but rather acting on behalf of the residents of Gahanna.

I. **ADJOURNMENT.**

With no further business before the Commission, Chair Barnhardt adjourned the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Jeremy A. VanMeter
Clerk of Council

*APPROVED by the Charter Review, this
day of 2026.*

Ethan Barnhardt

DRAFT