



# City of Gahanna

## Meeting Minutes

### Charter Review

200 S. Hamilton Road  
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

*Sheila P. Vitale- Chair*  
*Ellen T. Zehner- Vice Chair*  
*Ross Beckmann*  
*Bill Dutton*  
*Shane W. Ewald*  
*Alvin J. McKenna*  
*Isobel L. Sherwood*

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Tuesday, May 18, 2021

6:00 PM

Virtual Meeting

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#### Meeting Call-in Details:

Tel- (513) 306-4583

Conf. ID- 821 371 462#

**Public Input: email your request to speak, no less than 1 hour before the start of the meeting to [krystal.gonchar@gahanna.gov](mailto:krystal.gonchar@gahanna.gov)**

#### A. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Sheila Vitale called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Present** 6 - Alvin J. McKenna, Sheila P. Vitale, Ross Beckmann, Shane W. Ewald, Ellen T. Zehner, and Isobel Sherwood

**Absent** 1 - Bill Dutton

#### B. ITEM FOR APPROVAL:

[2021-0090](#)

Charter Review Commission Meeting Minutes for May 11, 2021.

**A motion was made by Sherwood, seconded by Zehner, that the Communication be Approved and Filed. The motion carried by the following vote:**

**Yes:** 6 - McKenna, Vitale, Beckmann, Ewald, Zehner and Sherwood

**Absent:** 1 - Dutton

#### C. PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Vitale opened the meeting to members of the public, who wish to comment on proposed charter changes.

Brenda Hoffman, 279 Highmeadow Dr.; thanked members for their service; would like to discuss 11.03, submitted by Director of Planning; curious about the intent for the change, reason for the change, and what

is at stake; some of the items in the redline are not codified or covered in Section 11; wants to know what will be done to protect residents about a possible usurping of power; Planning Commission is important; past; the mindset of a planning director is different from the mindset of a resident; development is important; the discussion for the changes could have been around streamlining process, but wants to ensure that residents are comfortable with changes; Planning Commission members are appointed, City Council is elected; a director is one individual; would like to see 11.03 be left alone for a little awhile because the city is going into a redevelopment phase due to being fully landlocked; our code is already behind on so many subjects and in so many places; we have enough on our plates right now; please consider leaving this alone for now, for one more round of administration to see what happens after the development of Buckles.

McKenna said there are a bunch of items being removed from 11.03; asked if Ms. Hoffman wants those to be left in. Hoffman confirmed; said if you look through Ch. 11, vacation of streets is not outlined there. McKenna asked if she prefers the power remaining in Planning Commission rather than a director. Hoffman confirmed.

Sherwood asked why Ms. Hoffman feels that the city is just now being landlocked. Hoffman said from her understanding, the last major parcel was the Buckles tract, so now they will be going through redevelopment rather than new development.

#### **D. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION:**

Chair Vitale said they were concerned about the Fire Department but does not see any representatives from there. There was an email submitted that included additional information on the timelines. Clerk stated that was researched gathered by the Deputy Clerk regarding zoning timeframe (see attached file "Research RE: Zoning Timeline). Vitale said surrounding areas are all over the place; the shortest length of time is in Reynoldsburg, which states Council needs to address at the next meeting; some do not have a timeline; something to think over when looking at 11.06. Asked if everyone had time to review changes that were looked at on the working draft, and if there were additional comments; still waiting on language from Mayor and City Attorney.

Sherwood said she read them over and other than a few minor changes in some strikethrough that is not in red, the wording has pretty much been covered; said 21.01 and 22.01, are those waiting for changes from the Mayor. Vitale said those are on hold because they felt they didn't need to move forward on those. Zehner said they discussed those last time, talked about having the commission meet less frequently but decided

there are more important issues to take to the ballot. Vitale asked if they want to wait until they get changes from Mayor and City Attorney to review before making suggestions. All in agreement.

Sherwood asked about the next steps. Vitale said they would submit changes to council after voting on items that would be moved forward; submitted redline changes. Zehner said council took it to the Board of Elections; all moved forward and all were approved in 2016. Ewald said he worked with the Council Clerk, and although presented to Council, they are not required by charter to submit it; it is submitted by the clerk. Sherwood said that they had a 3 column format, with present, proposed, and new language in all caps/bold, had a column with reasons for change. Ewald said that format was followed in 2016. Sherwood said paper is not in color. Ewald said it had strikethrough. Sherwood asked for clarification, that council does not need to pass it. Ewald said the recommendation is sent to council and council must submit to the board of election, per charter. Vitale said it must get to Council by July 1.

Ewald asked how the notice was given to the public for tonight's meeting. Clerk stated that a legal ad was published in the Rocky Fork Enterprise, and notice listed on the city website; also provided the ad to council members and asked them to share on social media. Ewald suggested that they hold another public input session given that only one person showed up. Sherwood said she was not surprised because there were many times during past Charter Review Commissions, where no one showed up. Zehner said that the RFE is not read as much as it was in the past. All agreed to hold another public comment session next week; asked the clerk to publish notice on the website again and social media; too late to run a legal ad.

Ewald asked about 18.01, if it would stay on the list. Vitale said it was put on the back burner. Sherwood said they may want to consider having 3.01 and 3.02 be combined as one change, as well as 5.13, 5.14, and 5.15 since they are related. Ewald said the only downside is that if one thing fails then it all fails. Ewald asked for 4.04, what were we looking to change. Sherwood said she is not sure that needs to change; believes that change can be eliminated. McKenna said he thought that was about appointments. Vitale said that was in 11.01, 12.01, and 13.01. McKenna said he believes that was the only reason 4.04 was in there, so if those others were removed, then 4.01 should be removed. Zehner believes the previous clerk put that change in, but they already discussed that it was not necessary. Clerk stated that there is nothing about Jan. 2 in the 4.04 section, so it must have been for something else. No one wanted to keep it in the proposed changes. Ewald said there's a section that talks about council members not holding other compensated office. McKenna said

that is 4.03. McKenna said in the first line it talks about compensated office but the next line does not; could add the word "compensated" in order to solve the issue. Ewald said a long time ago there was a school board representative serving on the city Parks Board which is compensated; the member dropped the compensation in order to remain serving on the board; does not want to see any confusion; does not want to prevent members from serving on boards that are uncompensated but serve to represent the interests of the city.

McKenna said regarding Ms. Hoffman's comments, does that put all the authority back on the director to approve everything if it is not addressed in the code; would like to discuss that further. Vitale said someone would have to make those decisions if Planning Commission is no longer involved. Ewald said on vacation of streets, Ohio Revised Code mandates those go to Council for approval, so if removed from Planning Commission it would still have to get approved by City Council. Sherwood said there used to be county code for that process, that said it must go to Planning first; that could have changed. Ewald said regardless of county code, state code would apply here. Vitale said the other areas referenced in 11.03 would fall on someone else. Sherwood said it would have to be addressed in code, and code can change at any time. Sherwood said part of what Director of Planning was saying, this may change how quickly things can get through council; so if they are changing 11.06, would they still have to change 11.03. McKenna said we are just cutting some things out of planning commission, to make the process faster, but some things still have to go to Council. Sherwood said there are other things in there that do not require council approval, such as conditional uses. Vitale reiterated that the Director was trying to make this smoother; did anyone hear any dire reasons for the change? Sherwood said she does not recall hearing anything. Ewald said the city is in the works of rewriting most of the zoning code; they are working with an outside firm. Ewald said he did not hear back about state code requirements for zoning process time. Clerk stated there were no caps listed in some of those examples provided in the research document. Ewald said it could be that those cities had it written elsewhere; curious where the 90/60 days came from rather than a flat 90 days; is curious about that section and would like to review further.

[2021-0042](#)

Charter, City of Gahanna & Other Communities

[2021-0043](#)

Proposed Charter Amendments

## **E. ADJOURNMENT**

Adjourned at 6:55 p.m.