

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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**CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION**

**CITYWIDE STRATEGIC PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES**

**Don Davis Room, 1st floor, City Hall**

**February 21, 2020**

**12:00 p.m.**

**In attendance:** Commissioners Betzy Santiago (Chair), W.C. Gentry, Nick Howland, Chris Hagan, Emily Lisska (arr. 12:19)

**Also**: Paige Johnston – Office of General Counsel; Jeff Clements – Council Research Division; Jessica Smith and Juliette Williams – Legislative Services Division;

**Meeting Convened**: 12:05 p.m.

Chairwoman Santiago convened the meeting and thanked the members for their hard work throughout the committee’s study process.

Approval of minutes

The minutes of the February 13, 202 committee meeting were amended to include Commissioner Gentry in the attendance list and **approved unanimously as amended**.

Committee Discussion

Ms. Santiago asked if the committee felt that public input was necessary on the committee’s recommendation before the full commission addresses that recommendation. The general consensus was that the public would have an opportunity to comment at the full commission meeting and didn’t feel that they would obtain any relevant testimony at this point.

The committee reviewed Commissioner Gentry’s latest revised draft of the committee recommendation. They agreed that Mr. Gentry would be the keeper of the document and make all final corrections (including scrivener’s errors) reflecting the committee’s discussion and vote today, than would provide the final revision to staff. The group agreed to the suggested revision regarding the use of at-large council members as the basis for the Strategic Planning Commission. Regarding representation from the executive branch, Paige Johnston said that her discussions with other staff in the Office of General Counsel indicated that having both the Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer on the Strategic Planning Commission is impractical because of the impact of the Government in the Sunshine Law on their ability to interact on their regular business. Ms. Santiago suggested replacing those two officers with the Mayor, eliminating the proposed two representatives of the river/environment and children’s issues, and adding a representative from the Duval Legislative Delegation so that all participants would be elected officials. Commissioner Gentry advocated for having the Mayor select a high-ranking member of the executive branch in place of specifying the CAO and CFO. Ms. Johnston also cautioned that the state’s prohibition against dual office-holding may also impact on who could serve on the commission so that should be explored in the context of making the recommendation. One way to overcome that obstacle would be to make membership on the Strategic Planning Commission a specific job duty of certain officials.

Commissioner Howland suggested allowing the listed members to appoint designees to represent their interests as a way to eliminate the Sunshine Law complications. Commissioner Lisska suggested having an even number of members might be helpful in eliminating conflicts. The committee grappled with the difficulty of how to avoid the Sunshine Law restrictions driving the commission membership while still getting the top level leaders who should be at the table to make the strategic plan. Designees of each of these officials is not ideal, but may be the most practical way to proceed. Mr. Gentry recommended avoiding specific job titles to the extent possible, since those can change over time.

Chairwoman Santiago questioned whether having two representatives of the river/environment and children’s issues artificially drives the scope and direction of the strategic plan. The group debated whether to keep those two areas on the commission versus appointing them to the Advisory Council; the consensus opinion was to move the two positions to the Advisory Council and remove the specific reference to the Kids Hope Alliance representative from the Advisory Council. Commissioner Hagan suggested the possibility of having the President of the Chamber of Commerce as a member of the Strategic Planning Commission, but the group decided against it.

Mr. Gentry noted that III(c)(g) St. Johns River and waterways was amended at the previous meeting to include “and water access”.

In response to a question, Mr. Gentry explained that III(c)(a) is intended to reflect the Charter’s statement about the City’s duty to provide a range of basic public services.

The date of adoption of the first Strategic Plan was corrected from June 15 of 2020 to 2022.

In Section V, Commissioner Lisska recommended that the Chamber of Commerce be represented by the Chair of the Board of Governors, not the President; the group agreed that the choice should be left to Chamber board to select either the Chair or the President.

The committee discussed how specific to be about the source of funding for the Strategic Planning Commission and who would make that decision. No change was made in the existing language.

Commissioner Gentry suggested the need for a cover page and an explanation of why a strategic plan was recommended as an introduction to the meat of the recommendation.

The group discussed how long the strategic plan should last. Having a 5-year plan that is first adopted in 2022 to coincide with the bicentennial of the city’s founding would place the first revision in 2027 which coincides with a mayoral election, which the committee wanted to avoid in its earlier meetings. Ten years seemed too long for some commissioners, four years too short. The appropriate length will be discussed with the full commission next week. The group discussed how often the Strategic Planning Commission should be actively meeting and thus subject to the Government in the Sunshine Law between full plan revisions. Commissioner Howland suggested dissolving the Strategic Planning Commission between plan revisions except for one month per year for the preparation and presentation of the required annual report, with the executive director and staff continuing permanently. Commissioner Gentry felt that members of the commission are always subject to the Sunshine Law whether they are actively meeting or not, so taking a hiatus would not seem to overcome the problem of members needing to avoid discussing any strategic plan-related topics in the interim. The possibility of dissolving the commission after the adoption of a new plan and having another group (the Advisory Council, executive director, a newly appointed subset of the former commission) make the required annual report was discussed. The committee asked Paige Johnston to confer with her colleagues in the General Counsel’s office and the Ethics Officer about what might be possible with regard to membership on the commission and the application of the Sunshine Law to their normal day-to-day work interactions. A suggestion was made to appoint an executive committee of the Strategic Planning Commission to oversee the staff and evaluate the departmental annual submissions and to call for meetings of the full commission if a substantial need arises. A chain of command for the executive director and staff is needed if the commission is not active; reporting to the Chief Administrative Officer was suggested.

Commissioner Gentry asked that any typographical or formatting changes be submitted to him by next Tuesday at noon for production of the final recommendation document to be distributed to the full commission, with the caveat that further changes may be coming after the committee meets again on February 27th.

Commissioner Gentry will make the presentation for the committee at next week’s full commission meeting. He requested some solid guidance from experts in the field (Office of General Counsel and Ethics Office) about the real impact of the Sunshine Law and how it impacts or limits what members of a strategic planning commission or advisory council may discuss with each other while they are serving on those bodies.

Commissioner Lisska recommended that VI(d) regarding periodic re-convening of the strategic commission should be relocated to Section III as subparagraph (g).

Public Participation

None

Next meeting

Thursday, February 27 from 1 to 3 p.m.

**Meeting adjourned:** 2:03 p.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Council Research Division

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Posted 2.25.20 5:30 p.m.