City of Kent Charter Review Commission Meeting

319 S. Water St., Kent, Ohio 44240
June 17,2025

MINUTES

Present: Jason Gartland; Tom Mahon; Dawn Albright; Barb Hipsman-Springer; Julie Hurd-Schmidt; Craig Berger; Jeff Roeger; Don Schjeldahl; Jasmine Jefferson; Adam Stephens; Brian Bialik; Todd Milton; Kai Carpenter; Darlene Rocco

Also Present: Hope Jones, Law Director; Kathy Coleman, Clerk of Council; Roger Sidoti, Council-at-Large; Melissa Celko, Ward 1 Council member

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- Adam called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.
- The commissioners reviewed proposed changes to Articles. Discussion included:
  - PREAMBLE
    Motion to approve amended version of Preamble as previously discussed, i.e., removal of the phrase "to Almighty God," was made by Craig, seconded by Brian, and passed 9-5. *Amended version will be submitted to Council for approval.*
  - 5.01 NUMBER, SELECTION, TERM
    Discussion of updates to wording to reflect size of Council and reference to ward boundary changes due to census. Motion to update language and return for vote was made by Don, seconded by Jasmine, and carried 14-0.
  - 5.03 REMOVAL
    Motion to approve amended version of 5.03 as previously discussed, i.e., addition of the phrase "as defined by the Ohio Revised Code" after the phrase "moral turpitude" was made by Brian, seconded by Don, and carried 11-3. *Amended version will be submitted to Council for approval.*
  - 5.15 RECALL PETITION AND ELECTION
    Motion to approve amended version of 5.15 as previously discussed, i.e., replacement of last sentence with "An officer removed by recall shall not be eligible for appointment to the vacancy created by their own removal, nor shall they be eligible for appointment to any other vacant office of the City for a period of one year following the election in which they were recalled" was made by

Jasmine, seconded by Craig, and carried 14-0. *Amended version will be submitted to Council for approval.*

- 6.03 ACTING CITY MANAGER
  Motion to approve amended version of 6.03 as previously discussed, i.e., replace the word “disability” with “inability to perform duties” was made by Barb, seconded by Jason, and carried 14-0. *Amended version will be submitted to Council for approval.*

- 6.04 POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE CITY MANAGER
  Discussion regarding the addition of another component to the City Manager’s responsibilities, to wit: “The City Manager will annually submit an economic development strategic plan to the council and the public, The plan will outline goals and objectives for achieving and maintaining a sustainable Kent economy, report on performance and metrics and resource needs for strategy implementation, include a 5 year forecast, and include any other section required by City Council.” Motion to update the language and return for vote was made by Brian, seconded by Craig, and carried 13-1-0.

- 7.03(E) DIRECTOR OF SAFETY
  Discussion regarding the addition of two components to the Director of Safety’s responsibilities, to wit: “The Director of Safety shall ensure that all citizens have the ability to obtain complaint forms in an anonymous manner and that those forms be available in different locations, such as City Hall and on the City’s official website” and “The Director of Safety shall present an annual report to Council of all public safety complaints and the status of each that were received the previous year.” Concerns included: the tone of the language being punitive; the language not being clear enough, i.e., “public safety complaints” could be misinterpreted, it should specify personnel or processes, not generalized complaints; lack of a timeline; due process not being supported; and not holding the DoS accountable enough. After discussion, it was decided that a subcommittee would be formed to continue working on this section. Jason, Tom, and Kai volunteered and other members were asked to participate.

- 8.07 CHARTER REVIEW
  Discussion regarding amended version of 8.07 as previously discussed, i.e., addition of specific process timeline, and number and diversity of members. Further discussion revolved around including an introductory meeting with council and the public; ensuring the commission was in place by the first of the year in which it would review the Charter; and other time-related considerations

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to ensure the commission had enough time to conduct a thorough review. Motion to continue fine tuning and return for vote was made by Jason, seconded by Craig, and carried 14-0.

- 9.02 NONPARTISAN ELECTIONS
  Discussion regarding amended version of 9.02 as previously discussed, i.e., declaration that all elections for Mayor and City Council be conducted on a nonpartisan basis. Further discussion around what would trigger a primary and associated processes. Motion to include language about the primary process and return for vote was made by Barb, seconded by Kai, and carried 14-0.
- 12.03 DELETION OF OBSOLETE LANGUAGE, REARRANGEMENT, REPRINTING AND CORRECTION OF TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS IN THE CHARTER
  This article was pulled from discussion by Hope.

- MISCELLANEOUS
  - Motion to officially invite department heads to remaining Charter Review meetings was made by Jason, seconded by Tom, and carried 14-0
  - Parks and Recreation will be discussed at the next meeting.

- ADJOURNMENT
  There being no further business, motion to adjourn was made by Craig, seconded by Tom, and carried 14-0. The meeting was adjourned at 8:28pm.

The next meeting will be held on June 24, 2025 at 6:00pm at City Hall.

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