



City of Sunnyvale

Agenda Item-No Attachments (PDF)

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REPORT TO COUNCIL

SUBJECT

Discussion and Possible Direction on Proposed Amendments to Charter Article VI (The Council) to be Submitted to Voters in the March 2020 Election to Implement City Council By-District Elections

BACKGROUND

On June 18, 2019 (RTC No. 19-0362), the City Council voted 6-2 to direct staff to prepare a ballot measure for the March 2020 election amending the City Charter to change the City's electoral system from seven at-large numbered City Council seats to six district seats and an at-large, directly elected mayor.

On September 10, 2019 (RTC No. 19-0798), staff provided an overview of necessary revisions to Article VI and highlighted three key policy issues requiring Council direction- mayor term, total term limits, and redistricting. The Council approved staff's general approach for the charter amendments of adding provisions necessary to implement district elections for six council districts and one at-large mayor, while maintaining existing concepts and principles in the Charter to the extent possible.

On October 8, 2019 (RTC No. 19- 1009), the Council further discussed the policy issues and conducted straw polls on the policy issues. Five Councilmembers (Fong, Goldman, Hendricks, Larsson, Smith) indicated preferences for a four-year term for the Mayor, and five Councilmembers (Klein, Fong, Goldman, Hendricks, Larsson) preferred a total limit of three-terms.

On October 29, 2019 (RTC No. 19-1133), the Council discussed a variety of issues and reached a consensus that the Charter draft should clarify (1) a residency requirement prior to filing candidacy papers, and (2) that the three-term total limit is also limited to service in a single position (mayor or councilmember) for no more than two full terms. In addition, four members (Klein, Hendricks, Larsson, Melton) tentatively indicated interest in addressing redistricting with a charter amendment section authorizing the Council to enact an ordinance addressing all matters pertinent to redistricting.

DISCUSSION

A full draft of proposed Charter revisions is attached for the Council's review and discussion. The draft reflects administrative updates necessary to eliminate the existing "numbered seat" election system and implement district elections for six council districts and one directly elected mayor, and the preferences expressed by a majority of Council members at meetings to date on the key policy issues of mayor term, total term limits, and redistricting. The Council should review and provide comment on this draft language so that it can be finalized in time to place the measure on the March 2020 ballot.

Staff notes that the Council raised several questions about application of the proposed amendments and/or additional charter changes not necessary to implement district elections. Due to the extremely short time frame to prepare a staff report for the Council's November 5 meeting, staff prioritized

drafting the proposed Charter revisions to include in the agenda packet for the meeting. Responses to questions posed by Council at the October 29 meeting will be provided in a supplemental Report to Council on November 4, 2019.

A resolution approving the final Charter language and placing the measure on the ballot must be adopted no later than 88 days before the election. The last City Council date to place the measure on the ballot is December 3, 2019; however, the City Clerk's preferred date for this action is the November 12, 2019 Council meeting. Adoption of a resolution approving the final proposed Charter amendments and placing the charter measure on the ballot is currently scheduled for November 12.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Public contact was made by posting the Council agenda on the City's official-notice bulletin board outside City Hall, at the Sunnyvale Senior Center, Community Center and Department of Public Safety; and by making the agenda and report available at the Sunnyvale Public Library, the Office of the City Clerk and on the City's website.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Council discuss the draft proposed amendments to Charter Article VI and provide direction regarding the proposed amendments to facilitate the drafting of the final Charter language for Council's consideration and approval at the Council's November 12 meeting.

Prepared by: Melissa C. Tronquet, Assistant City Attorney

Reviewed by: Jaqui Guzmán, Deputy City Manager

Reviewed by: Kent Steffens, City Manager

Reviewed and Approved by: John A. Nagel, City Attorney

ATTACHMENT

1. Draft Charter Amendments