

**Committee Members Present:** Joseph Andaya  
Jack Ardner  
Jacob Cleverly  
Shelley Denison  
Christopher Dresel  
Tim Fier  
Jack Hollis  
Cathy Keathley  
Dana Stroud

**Committee Members Not Present:** Amanda Gayken  
Debra Stuart  
Marcela Wash

**Staff Present:** Kevin McConnell, City Attorney  
Margarita Contreras, Administrative Assistant  
Dara Wright, Paralegal

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A public meeting of the Charter Review Committee (CRC) was called to order by Chair Joseph Andaya, on the 13<sup>th</sup> of June, 2022, at 6:00 p.m., via Zoom. The meeting was digitally recorded and minutes were prepared by Dara Wright.

## **1. PUBLIC TESTIMONY.**

Written testimony was received from Paul Wilcox. He provided information regarding past Council candidate distribution and the number of candidates per election, since the committee is considering districting.

Written testimony was also received from Sara Wolk from the Equal Cote Coalition. She provided information and responded to claims and statements made during a FairVote presentation at the subcommittee's May 18, 2022, meeting. Specifically, she addressed issues such as vote splitting, transparency of election results and election integrity, the Equal Vote Criterion, voting methods leading to better representation of women and people of color, and strategic voting. Sara Wolk's testimony provided comparisons between STAR voting and Ranked Choice Voting on these topics.

Also received was additional information from Sara Wolk which was shared by Chair Andaya. The information was regarding pros and cons of a proportional

representation system, and how she felt that upgrading to a voting method which prevents vote-splitting and spoiled elections as well as moving away from an at-large system would be recommended first priorities for the committee to consider.

## **2. OPEN PUBLIC COMMENTS.**

Carol Rulla provided oral testimony and commented on the committee's consideration of the feasibility of multi-member districts. She wanted to caution the committee on using data on numbers of candidates from previous elections from long ago. She served on a previous Charter Review Committee and one of the recommended changes at that time was to provide compensation to Councilors. Carol Rulla felt that since compensation for Councilors is now available, and since that information is now available on the City's website, the number of candidates and diversity of candidates has changed. The number of candidates running for each position during elections also can vary based on whether incumbents are running. She also stated that changing voting methods and a possible change from an at-large system to a districting system of some nature would further change the number and diversity of candidates in future elections.

## **3. APPROVE MINUTES FROM PREVIOUS MEETING.**

Without objection, the minutes from the May 23, 2022, meeting were unanimously approved by the committee members present.

## **4. REPORT FROM SUBCOMMITTEE AND DISCUSSION ON ELECTION/VOTING SYSTEM RECOMMENDATION TIMELINE.**

The subcommittee submitted a status report to the committee, and Member Hollis provided an overview of their work thus far. The subcommittee discussed whether they could make an informed decision and recommendation to the CRC regarding the voting and election system issues in time for the November 2022 election. The subcommittee voted and decided that they would not be able to complete their work in time for the November 2022 election. The subcommittee still needs to do public outreach regarding these issues before moving forward with a recommendation.

The subcommittee felt optimistic that they would be able to complete their public outreach, with the assistance of the subcommittee's facilitator, Shani Harris-Bagwell, by the end of the year. The subcommittee will continue to meet weekly, but will limit their meetings to two-hour meetings, and will try to build in some breaks and time off from weekly meetings periodically. There was also discussion about Resolution 3478, which states that Council may extend the term of the CRC if needed.

The subcommittee met three times since the May 23, 2022, CRC meeting. The subcommittee has begun its work with a facilitator, Shani Harris-Bagwell. Shani will assist the subcommittee with connecting with community groups and attend in-person events with subcommittee members. Subcommittee members attended a Field Day event on June 11, 2022, and will also attend the Juneteenth Gresham event on June 19, 2022. Moving forward, the subcommittee anticipates being able to gather public input on various topics and then report back to the CRC.

Chair Andaya asked whether committee members would like to look at the subcommittee's proposed events list, and whether there were committee members interested in attending some of these events, in addition to the subcommittee members. Member Keathley expressed an interest in attending events but not collecting community feedback, since she felt she wasn't as well versed in some of the election reform topics that the subcommittee has been focused on. Kevin McConnell stated that it could be difficult to record and properly document community input if committee members were doing outreach individually. Mr. McConnell would not recommend that committee members attend events in their official capacity, though members could attend community events in their private capacity.

Chair Hollis explained that the subcommittee is putting together their public outreach process, so that they will have a streamlined process for future questions on which the committee would like the subcommittee to obtain public input.

The members discussed whether there were other issues or questions for which they would like the subcommittee to gather community feedback. Member Keathley stated that she wasn't prepared to have a discussion regarding which additional issues the committee may want to address. Mr. McConnell recommended that the committee narrow down their priority list but suggested adding the discussion as a future agenda item so that all committee members have the opportunity to prepare for the discussion. Vice Chair Ardner expressed that the committee needed to decide which issues would be of top priority to the committee as a whole before asking the subcommittee to gather community input on topics, because there may be no point in gathering public input regarding an issue which isn't a priority for the committee.

Member Fier also noted that the Shani Harris-Bagwell will be holding focus groups to assist the subcommittee with gathering public input.

Member Hollis stated that he would like an impartial third party to analyze some of the statements being made by the STAR Vote and Ranked Choice Vote advocates, as there seems to be some disagreements about what is fact and what isn't. Member Stroud expressed her agreement with this idea. Member Hollis suggested that Dr. Lochner and Dr. Seljan could possibly be that impartial third party. Vice Chair Ardner stated that he thought that comparing methods, specifically STAR Voting and Ranked Choice Voting, was already in the scope of work that the subcommittee asked for. Member Keathley asked what the cost of asking the professors to do this work might be. Mr. McConnell confirmed that this work would be covered by the contract that is in place with the professors.

Member Hollis clarified that he is looking for specific input regarding the conversation going on between the STAR Vote and Ranked Choice Vote advocates, rather than a general comparison between the voting methods. Mr. McConnell stated that asking these types of clarification questions is well within the purview of the contract. Member Hollis stated that the subcommittee would discuss whether they want to send additional clarification questions to the professors at the next subcommittee meeting.

## **5. DISCUSSION ON URBAN RENEWAL PROVISION OF CHARTER (AS TIME ALLOWS).**

The members discussed the possible changes to the Urban Renewal provision of the Charter. Mr. McConnell recommended that the committee decide whether or not they want to take on this issue. If the committee does want to pursue this issue, one of the options presented by the City's Urban Renewal department at the May 23, 2022, meeting, was to change the Charter provision so that it is consistent with current state laws, which would only require matters be referred to the electorate if there is an increase in the boundaries of the Urban Renewal Area by more than 1% of the existing area or an increase the amount of maximum indebtedness. The second option was to change the amend the Charter so that it was consistent with Urban Renewal provisions in Charters from Cities of similar size to Gresham, which require substantial amendments be referred to the electorate, however those cities' definition of substantial amendments is much less restrictive than Gresham's current Charter language. Chair Andaya shared the table from the Urban Renewal department's presentation, which summarized the options presented.

There was discussion on whether committee members had a preference regarding the two presented options. Member Keathley stated that she would be unable to recommend that the Charter language remain the same unless there were justifications for keeping the language so restrictive. She felt that changing the language so that it is consistent with state laws seemed to be the easier option.

Member Hollis agreed that the current language seems to be a problem. He had some push back regarding why the Charter provision was written this way in the first place and thought that it was because there was a problem with displacement in the past. He wondered if the restrictions in the Charter prevented displacement from happening and thought that the Anti-Displacement Memo provided by the Urban Renewal department did a good and thorough job of addressing that issue and is intended to keep displacement from happening. He would like to learn about whether there are any benefits to keeping the language the same and wanted to know more about why the Charter provision was written this way.

Member Cleverly said that other municipalities have less stringent substantial changes clauses but also do leave power with the voters. The committee would have to look into why those municipalities set up their systems in this way, but he wondered if those provisions were in place intentionally to make certain changes harder to make, while also having language that is less restrictive than Gresham's current language.

Member Stroud felt that she was not yet educated enough to make a decision regarding this issue and felt that the process felt a bit rushed to her. She had concerns about urban renewal efforts incidentally causing gentrification and felt that the City does not currently have any policies in place that would prevent gentrification of the Rockwood area. She expressed concern about having this decision put on the shoulders of the committee, and not understanding the potential ramifications if safety nets are not in place first. She also stated that she agreed that the current language is problematic and that changing it could potentially give more freedom and flexibility to the Council, so that they could adapt quickly as the community's needs change over time. Member Stroud thought

that whichever option the committee recommends should be well thought out and researched.

Chair Andaya suggested that the committee could send questions to the Urban Renewal department or invite them back to a future meeting. He also stated that he thinks the current language in the Charter seemed a bit archaic, and that there were pros and cons to both options for language changes.

Mr. McConnell noted that if the committee has additional questions for the Urban Renewal department staff, he recommended that the committee invite them to a future meeting so that the committee can make an informed decision on this topic. Mr. McConnell also referenced ORS 457.180(3), which states that urban renewal agencies have the power to “[m]ake plans for the relocation of persons and property displaced by an urban renewal project.” He stated that the law anticipates that people may be displaced by urban renewal projects but does not provide a solution, so the committee may address that if they so desire.

Member Hollis stated that several members have said they would like more information on this topic. He stated that one of the things he would like to hear is information from someone who dissents and doesn't think that the Charter language should be changed.

Member Denison shared that she has a master's degree in city planning and is a professional city planner. One thing about Gresham's Urban Renewal Plan that stood out to her is that every time it talks about housing, it talks about mixed income housing, combining quality and affordability. While she acknowledged that this could be somewhat lip service to the idea of affordable housing, she felt that the work that has actually been done in Gresham are the types of efforts which are usually championed by anti-displacement advocates, although those efforts could always change over time. She shared that based upon her experience with research and work around anti-displacement efforts, the process by which Urban Renewal Plans are changed or extended is not one of the variables that can lead to gentrification or displacement.

Member Hollis asked Member Denison whether she thought the changes being considered seem like something that could heavily impact gentrification, or if there are other more substantial things that impact gentrification. Member Denison stated that it was a complicated question because although she has never seen evidence of the process by which urban renewal funding is decided leading to gentrification or displacement, doesn't mean that it couldn't happen. Member Denison also felt that when it comes to combatting displacement, it is much more effective at the policy and project level than it is at the City Charter level. Member Hollis said that this information made him feel more comfortable with coming in line with state regulations.

Member Keathley noted that any decision that the committee may come to will be a recommendation to Council, and Council may tweak the recommendation. The arguments in support of the recommendation would be compiled if it was referred to voters, which would help educate voters on this issue. She said it doesn't feel like this is a final decision, rather a recommendation which keeps the ball moving down the court.

Chair Andaya noted that ORS 457.095(2)(d) states that an urban renewal ordinance shall include determinations and findings that “[p] rovision has been made to house displaced persons within their financial means in accordance with ORS 35.500 (Definitions for ORS 35.500 to 35.530) to 35.530 (Federal law controls).” He also suggested that the committee could ask nearby cities of comparable size to Gresham how and why they handled their Urban Renewal Charter provisions the way they did, and whether they considered other options.

Member Fier stated that the committee is looking at a Charter issue, and that displacement and gentrification is more of a policy issue. He said he did not like that Gresham has the most restrictive Urban Renewal Charter provision in the state. He felt that in his experience, usually things are restrictive because those in power wish to stay in power. Member Fier reviewed ORS 457 and found that there were checks and balances within that statute. He felt that changing the Charter so that it matches state statute would make it easiest on Urban Renewal, while also maintaining checks and balances, and then would trust policy makers to address displacement and gentrification.

Member Hollis pointed out that some of the issues with displacement may still exist with the checks and balances in the state statute, because if a person is compensated for the cost of their house, they may not be able to buy a new one at that point in their life, or it may not be enough money to buy a new house in a different area. Even with the displacement provisions which exist in state statute, displacement is a significant problem. Member Hollis said he was concerned about displacement when initially considering this provision of the Charter, but now feels that the committee’s decision really isn’t about displacement and that’s not what the committee would be fixing here. He felt addressing the issue of displacement may either be outside the scope of the Charter or would need to be addressed from a different angle.

Vice Chair Ardner said his cursory review of the history of Charter changes did not reveal any changes to this provision of the Charter. The committee has been given reasons why the language wasn’t such a good idea and should be made more flexible. He stated that the example which was cited, the extension of the Urban Renewal Plan, was readily approved by the voters, so he wasn’t sure of the harm that’s being done right now.

Chair Andaya suggested asking the Urban Renewal department what the intent of the Charter language was, and what the results are. Member Dresel agreed that there has to be a reason for the original Charter provision language. He also felt that the committee needed to consider how any changes might impact City policies moving forward and be cognizant of the things they are looking to change as they evaluate their options.

Vice Chair Ardner noted that there are several sections of the Urban Renewal provision of the Charter, and that one defines a non-substantial change, which currently is limited to typographic errors and very minor changes. An alternate approach might be to rewrite the paragraph defining non-substantial changes, which would allow more flexibility while also maintaining the need for voter approval on larger changes. He stated that perhaps the committee doesn’t have all of the options on the table yet.

Member Stroud asked if members of the committee would be open to inviting Rockwood CDC to a future meeting to speak on this topic. Member Hollis stated that another option would be to refer this issue to the subcommittee to obtain public input and meet with Rockwood CDC. Member Keathley stated that she would like to participate in the discussions and work around this issue, rather than watching the subcommittee. Chair Andaya did note that any committee member can submit written or oral testimony to the subcommittee as a private citizen. Member Hollis stated that it doesn't have to be one or the other, that the subcommittee could do public input, and then the greater committee could determine whether they want additional input.

Member Keathley stated that she understands she can provide oral testimony to the subcommittee, but she would miss out on the back-and-forth question and answer. She also wondered whether this is something that the committee would like to get to Council in time for the November 2022 election, and if so, the committee may want to refer the matter to the subcommittee since they meet weekly rather than monthly. Chair Hollis stated that his understanding that the Urban Renewal department did not intend for the committee to have their recommendation finalized in time for the November 2022 election. Member Keathley stated that the committee will need to decide whether the issue will stay with the full committee or be sent to the subcommittee to work on, so that work doesn't need to be duplicated. Since she would like to be apart of the process, Member Keathley advocated for the issue staying with the full committee.

Member Hollis asked whether Member Keathley could attend subcommittee meetings and speak with the Rockwood CDC, even though she isn't a voting member, as the subcommittee members would not have an opposition to such a thing. Mr. McConnell stated that since Member Keathley is not a member of the subcommittee so she should not act as a member of the subcommittee, but that the committee could add additional members to the subcommittee if they wanted to do so. He stated that the fundamental question should be whether this is something the subcommittee will work on, or something that the full committee will work on, and that if members want to be involved in the full process, perhaps the full committee should work on the issue.

Member Dresel asked whether the subcommittee would include the data and public input it has gathered with anything that's brought before the main committee. Mr. McConnell stated that if the subcommittee is making a recommendation to the full committee, then the subcommittee could detail all of the information it has gathered.

Member Hollis stated that if there is a member of the greater committee who is uncomfortable with the subcommittee taking on this issue, then the issue should stay with the greater committee. Member Keathley stated that she is interested in the subject matter and would like it to be in front of the full committee. She said that it isn't that she objects to the subcommittee taking on the task, it's just that she'd like to participate.

Member Hollis made a motion to move the urban renewal question over to the subcommittee. Member Stroud seconded the motion. The members present voted as follows:

Member	Joseph Andaya	Jack Ardner	Jacob Cleverley	Shelley Denison	Christopher Dresel	Tim Fier	Jack Hollis	Cathy Keathley	Dana Stroud
Yes	X				X				
No		X	X			X	X	X	X

Therefore, the urban renewal question will stay with the full committee.

Member Stroud stated that Albina Vision might be another good group to invite to give a presentation to the committee. Without objection, the committee decided to invite the Rockwood CDC and the City’s Urban Renewal department staff to their next meeting, if schedules allow.

Member Stroud provided background information on Albina Vision. The Albina neighborhood was a cultural hub of mostly Black community members, and that community was displaced through urban renewal efforts in Portland. Member Hollis thought that this was the voice that he’d like to hear from, people who may see a problem with what the committee is potentially doing. Without objection, the committee decided to invite Albina Vision to a future meeting.

**6. DISCUSSION ON COLLABORATION BOARD (AS TIME ALLOWS).**

Member Keathley stated that at this point in the meeting, she would like to table the discussion for the next meeting, but that the committee could define a process by which they would define their next topics of focus. She suggested that each member could come to the next meeting with their top two topics. Member Keathley also wondered whether there were any items on the priority boards which would not require public input.

Vice Chair Ardner stated that he did not have an issue with deferring the conversation to the next meeting but pointed out that it is June and the committee has used 45% of their originally allotted time. He stated that he thinks the committee needs to pick up the pace if they want to have adequate time to analyze the approximately 45 items currently on the priority board. Member Hollis also suggested the committee make a list of the topics which would need public input. Member Keathley agreed with Member Hollis and also noted that just because there are 45 items on the committee’s priority board, doesn’t mean that all 45 topics need to be evaluated. She suggested looking at the top 10 or 15 items on the board.

Member Cleverley stated that one of the big concerns that came up when the committee created their initial priority list was that they wouldn’t have enough public input. He suggested creating a shorter list of priority items and then sending those to the subcommittee to gather public input. The committee could then identify the top priority items on that list based upon the public input.

Member Stroud wondered if focusing on urban renewal would be the most efficient use of committee time since that has been identified as a topic of interest to the committee. The public engagement work done by the subcommittee could be utilized to help the committee prioritize which topics they would like to focus on. She thought it could potentially be a waste of time for the committee to pare down its list when community input could potentially steer them in a different direction entirely. Chair Andaya stated that



his concern was that if the committee waits to identify priorities based on public input, then they will still need to gather information and education resources, discuss potential options or solutions, and then obtain additional public input on the potential solutions.

Member Fier stated that the priority list is the committee's list, so it could still be productive to pare it down, and that several items on the board fall under an "elections" category. Member Hollis stated that it might be worth the committee's time to identify which topics would not require public input.

Vice Chair Ardner stated that he strongly believed that the committee needs to no more than 10 topics to focus on and did not think it would be productive to gather public input on all 45 proposals. Additionally, the committee could move something higher up on the priority list if new information comes up during public outreach.

Chair Andaya noted that a lot of the lower priority issues on the board were his items because he took a fine-toothed comb to the Charter. He stated that he would potentially be able to reduce the number of his items on the board. Member Hollis suggested that members could come to the next meeting with a list of their low priority topics. If there were no members who objected, then those items could be moved to low priority or removed from the list.

Vice Chair Ardner asked whether there were any reasons why the current Miro priority board couldn't be made available to the public so that community members could follow along with the committee's process. Mr. McConnell stated that there would be no reason for the current version of the board to be accessible to the public. Dara Wright stated that the link to the current version of the board could be posted on the CRC website. Without objection, the committee asked the City to post the link to the current version of the board on the website.

## **7. AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETING; FUTURE SCHEDULE.**

The next meeting will include public comment, a report from the subcommittee, discussion with City's Urban Renewal department (as schedules allow), presentation from Rockwood CDC or Albina Vision (as schedules allow), and discussion around narrowing down or focusing the CRC priority board.

There was discussion on whether the committee might like to consider meeting more frequently, such as twice a month, or every three weeks. Dara Wright noted that three weeks from this meeting is the Fourth of July. Mr. McConnell stated he would need to work with City staff to ensure that meetings could be adequately staffed and noticed if the committee began meeting more frequently. Member Hollis said that the subcommittee would be willing to modify their schedule, by meeting 3 weeks on and 1 week off, if that would assist with scheduling. The date of the next CRC meeting will be determined after CAO obtains available dates from City staff and the members of the CRC.

## **8. OTHER ITEMS.**

Member Stroud asked if there was an update from the law professors or Larry Morgan. Mr. McConnell stated that City staff will work on obtaining an update for the committee and subcommittee.

Chair Andaya also mentioned that a potential event for the subcommittee to attend would be the Gresham Farmer's Market.

**There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.**