

JOHN ARDNER
SHELLEY DENISON
CHRISTOPHER DRESEL

TIM FIER
JACK HOLLIS
DANA STROUD

**GRESHAM CITY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE –
SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 25, 2023
OPEN SESSION – 1 PM
VIA ZOOM MEETING (SEE INSTRUCTIONS BELOW)**

The Gresham City Charter Review Committee will be holding the
January 25th Meeting at 1 P.M. via Zoom Meeting.

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://greshamoregon.zoom.us/j/85391217535?pwd=ZVZDamcwWHBFY0g3dTJTQ2NxNVcxUT09>

Passcode: 1THczkA822

Or One tap mobile :

US: +16699006833,,85391217535#,,,,*7769130411# or +12133388477,,85391217535#,,,,*7769130411#

Or Telephone:

Dial(for higher quality, dial a number based on your current location):

US: +1 669 900 6833 or +1 213 338 8477 or +1 253 215 8782 or +1 646 876 9923

Webinar ID: 853 9121 7535

Passcode: 7769130411

International numbers available: <https://greshamoregon.zoom.us/j/85391217535?pwd=ZVZDamcwWHBFY0g3dTJTQ2NxNVcxUT09>

Persons who desire to access the meeting and are unable to access the meeting via Zoom are encouraged to contact Jane Leo, Policy Analyst, by calling 503-618-2508 or emailing by 5:00 pm two business days before the meeting, so that the City can provide alternate arrangements.

Persons who desire translation services for this meeting must notify Jane Leo, Policy Analyst, by calling 503-618-2508 or emailing Jane.Leo@GreshamOregon.gov by 5:00 pm three business days before the meeting, so that the City can make arrangements for translation services.

If you wish to receive notices of future meetings, please contact Jane Leo, Policy Analyst, at Jane.Leo@GreshamOregon.gov or (503) 618-2508.

**GRESHAM CITY CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE –
SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 25, 2023**

- 1. PUBLIC COMMENT/TESTIMONY**

- 2. VOTER DISTRICTS**
 - **Final Vote on District**
 - **Discussion of District – RCV**
 - **Discussion of “Why Eliminate At-Large” Elections Draft Statement**

- 3. CHARTER RECOMMENDATION DRAFT REVIEW—**
 - **Gender-Neutral Pronouns**
 - **Remove 60% Approval to Amend Charter Requirement**

- 4. OTHER ITEMS/AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**
 - **Chair’s Comments at January 30th Charter Review Committee Meeting**
 - **Subcommittee’s February Meeting Schedule**

January 18, 2023

Committee Members Present:

Jack Ardner
Tim Fier
Jack Hollis, Chair
Dana Stroud
Christopher Dresel

Absent:

Shelley Denison

Staff Present:

Kevin McConnell, City Attorney
Jane Leo, Policy Analyst
Margarita Contreras, Admin Assistant

Chair Hollis called the meeting to order at 3:03 p.m.

1. PUBLIC COMMENT/TESTIMONY

Mr. Paul Wilcox submitted written comments on the proposed Charter Amendment regarding use of Gender-Neutral Pronouns.

Ms. Carol Rulla offered oral and written testimony regarding the fiscal impact of an expanded City Council, in-district residency and in-district voting, district boundary changes impact on seated Councilors, transition to districts, use of a lottery for choosing members of the Boundary Adjustment Committee, as well as requested consideration be given to what happens if Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) fails and Districts passes—or the reverse.

Chair Hollis asked that Districts-RCV be added to an upcoming meeting agenda. Mr. McConnell reported the judicial approval of Portland’s request to include districts and RCV in a single ballot measure.

2. VOTER DISTRICTS DISCUSSION—CONTINUATION

Chair Hollis recapped the district options under consideration:

- 6 Districts with 1 Councilor
- 4 Districts with 2 Councilors (Multi-Winner Districts)
- 8 Districts with 1 Councilor

In response to a recommendation from Vice Chair Ardner, Chair Hollis asked Subcommittee members to speak to their “bottom line” in the decision-making process and desired general outcomes:

Chair Hollis: Wants a system that makes it better. Expressed hesitancy to support the 8 Districts option, if RCV fails, as it doesn’t help with the 100-percent majoritarian outcomes. He wants inclusion of the majority and non-majority in election outcomes. Gains are: local representation and possibly better access to City Councilor representing the district. Multi-member districts provide opportunity for more viewpoints/input.

Member Fier: Commented on population increase of 246-percent from 1980 to 2022 and demographic changes of Gresham. He stated he is leaning towards the 8-Districts option and spoke to his support of non-majoritarian outcomes.

Member Stroud: Commented on political polarization. Having non-majoritarian outcomes allow for more space for moderates, centralists, and civilized conversations for a positive future. She wants to see effective governance. She spoke to wanting fairness in terms of efforts and dollars to have success and representation on the Council, as well as wanting an outcome where people who have been historically underserved by our city government feel the system is working on behalf of them as well as everyone else.

Member Dresel: Commented on population growth and demographic changes to which Gresham needs to change and adapt. The best way to do this is bring in historically underserved groups, marginalized communities.

He cited a desire to expand youth involvement (future voters) in the Charter review process including adding a youth position to the Charter Review Committee.

Vice Chair Ardner: Commented on restoring power to local areas through districts which will empower neighborhood groups and voters, to the extent such is possible. He desires removal of the influence of money and the power structure. He wants to force democracy down to all the voters.

Following discussion of youth involvement in the Charter Review process, Chair Hollis requested Member Dresel, and the other Subcommittee members, write up a Youth Involvement Proposal and commented this topic could be a side project. He would like to check-in on this proposal at a later time.

Chair Hollis asked for thoughts as to which is more important: small districts or multi-winner districts.

He called for a non-binding straw poll regarding districts. The final vote is tabled until the January 25, 2023, Subcommittee meeting.

Member	8 Districts/8 Councilors	4 Districts/Multi-Winner
Dresel		✓
Fier		✓
Stroud		✓
Ardner	✓	
Hollis		✓

Ms. Leo encouraged all Subcommittee members to submit their statements as to Why At-Large Elections should be Abandoned and Why Districts are Preferred (statements known as “homework assignments”). She will compile the individual comments into a single statement for the Subcommittee’s consideration. She will resend to members districting consideration and Secretary of State Guidance documents to assist in their deliberations.

Chair Hollis requested the upcoming agenda include a final vote on District recommendation and consideration of February meeting dates to accommodate Member Stroud’s absence from February 15 - 22.

Ms. Leo reviewed the January 30th Charter Review Committee agenda: Chair Hollis will provide an update on the Subcommittee’s decision on districts and address questions, the Gender-Neutral Pronoun recommendation, the Elected Auditor’s recommendation and, possibly, the Elimination of the 60-percent to Amend the Charter Requirement recommendation.

3. CHARTER RECOMMENDATION DRAFT REVIEW **Gender-Neutral Pronouns Recommendation**

Member Stroud presented an amended version of the Gender-Neutral Pronoun Recommendation and provided a statement of support for the change. She commented the intent of the amendment as being that Gender-Neutral Pronouns be used in all future City documents.

After a thorough discussion, including the raising of concerns for the liability of the City—its employees and elected officials—if Gender-Neutral Pronouns are not used, Ms. Leo was instructed to present the amendment to Mr. McConnell for his review. The Subcommittee asked that Mr. McConnell provide clarity as to whether the proposed amendment is written in such a manner as to be applicable to official documents and whether it encroaches on personal freedoms.

By consensus, the Subcommittee conditionally approved the amendments pending further review by Mr. McConnell and Ms. Leo.

4. OTHER ITEMS/AGENDA ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The January 25th agenda will include a final vote on District structure, discussion of Districts and RCV if one should fail at the ballot, Charter amendment recommendations which may be ready for review, and February schedule of Subcommittee meetings.

NEXT MEETING: January 25, 2023, beginning at 1:00 p.m.

There being no further business, the Subcommittee adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

From: [Jane Leo](#)
To: [Jane Leo](#)
Subject: FW: Gresham Charter Review Subcommittee Meeting January 18, 2023
Date: Thursday, January 19, 2023 2:22:39 PM

From: Carol Rulla <crullaor@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 19, 2023 1:43 PM
To: Jane Leo <jane.leo@greshamoregon.gov>
Subject: Re: Gresham Charter Review Subcommittee Meeting January 18, 2023

CAUTION: External Email

Here's a synopsis of my remarks at yesterday's subcommittee meeting:

The fiscal impacts of adding 2 councilors are minimal. In addition to residency requirements for candidates, make clear that only district residents may vote for district candidates; this is important to reduce barriers for candidates. Consider whether councilors may continue to serve & run for their seat if boundary changes put them out of district; this was a provision added to our Charter when we previously had districts. Also, consider how to manage the transition to districts especially if the number of councilors increases. I suggest recommending lottery-selected panels for community oversight of district boundary decisions. Finally, evaluate whether the RCV voting method & district recommendations should be one ballot measure, or if they are separate, the consequences if one fails, especially if RCV fails and 2-member/2-winner districts pass. Presumably 2-member/2-winner districts without RCV would be a top 2 plurality vote.

Thanks,
Carol

| | |

From: [Paul Wilcox](#)
To: [Jane Leo](#)
Subject: GCRC
Date: Friday, January 13, 2023 2:19:40 PM

CAUTION: External Email

Hello Ms. Leo,

My follow-up after watching the Zoom recording from 1/11/23. The first hour of the meeting seemed to have more to do with guidance from City Council. I very much agreed with committee member Ardner that it's not the place of Council to request or instruct which sections of the Charter the GCRC is to "review". I also question the Council putting such major changes as RCV and districts on a very low turnout election cycle. Troutdale had a local gas tax measure on the Nov. 2015 ballot, and the voter turnout was 26%!

On the major subject of districting, what seems to be the current preference is four two-member districts, with two districts electing both their members every two years. It gets very confusing when Chair Hollis refers to eight-member districts! I think what is being proposed is unlike any other city in Oregon, the major difference with other cities with multi-member districts being that the two members are not elected in alternating election years. I do understand the reason being to allow for a winning candidate who had less than a majority vote. However, if there were only two candidates, they could be very different. With RCV, and 3+ candidates, they might tend to be more like-minded.

One argument I'm hearing for districting is that a citizen would have a local representative "like" themselves. This strikes me as a very false assumption that everyone in a particular "geographic" area is the same. In a previous meeting Carol Rulla pointed out that the current Council is fairly diverse, and there was only one change post-election. There are other areas for citizens to have "in-common" with their representatives than where they live. For example, they might feel more comfortable speaking with someone of their own race, gender, political views, economic status, etc., etc. A citizen might not find all of those in the same person, so they'd have to prioritize. Generally speaking, I think committee member Ardner is on the right track as far as what districting is intended to accomplish, "geographic" representation. Unless there is distinct segregation of whatever sort, it's not going to guarantee a "variety" of representatives.

Paul Wilcox

Sent from my iPad

From: [Paul Wilcox](#)
To: [Jane Leo](#)
Subject: GCRC
Date: Wednesday, January 11, 2023 5:41:41 PM

CAUTION: External Email

Hello Ms. Leo,

First off, I want to commend committee member Ardner for his creating the candidate election history. Very impressive work! However, I did notice one measure that is somewhat deceptive, in the older reports anyway. The “undervote” is being deducted from the total votes cast, which in turn reduces the percentage of the total vote received by each candidate. This impacts whether the winner received a majority or a plurality. To cite just one example, in the 1998 Council Position #2 election between Crawford and Lassen, the combined total is only 70%, with 1% write-in, and 29% undervote. Using the total of votes actually cast, the distribution would be 57%-43%, giving the winner a majority rather than a plurality. Votes not cast shouldn’t enter into that calculation. It appears that this only occurred for the 1998 election, so the color-coding for the rest of the years should be correct.

I would fully expect races with three or more candidates to have a plurality winner rather than a majority winner simply because votes are more widely distributed, although it’s certainly possible for a popular candidate to win a majority in a multi-candidate election. RCV could apply in some multi-candidate elections, but it’s not guaranteed if a candidate gets a majority in the first round, plus how many elections have 3+ candidates for every position number?

Paul Wilcox

Sent from my iPad

From: [Paul Wilcox](#)
To: [Jane Leo](#)
Subject: Residency requirement?
Date: Friday, January 13, 2023 1:21:33 PM

CAUTION: External Email

Hello Ms. Leo,

I was extremely surprised to hear at the 1/11/23 GCRC meeting that committee member Ardner was under the impression that Gresham didn't have a residency requirement for Council members. The Charter language refers to the year before election, but the only implied expectation that they will remain a resident is in the section on what creates a vacancy.

Troutdale experienced an unusual situation this election in that a Council candidate won election, but had moved out of the city before the time to be sworn-in, so left a vacancy.

Paul Wilcox

Section 11. QUALIFICATION FOR COUNCIL.

(a) No person may be eligible to serve on the council unless at the time of their election or appointment he or she is a qualified voter under the meaning of the Constitution of Oregon and has resided in the city at least one year immediately preceding the election or appointment. For the purpose of this section, city shall mean any area included in the corporate limits as of the date of the election or appointment.

Section 31. OFFICE VACANCIES.

(a) An elective office of the city shall be deemed vacant before the expiration of the term upon the incumbent's:

(6) Ceasing to reside within the Gresham City limits, or

Sent from my iPad

**2021-2023 CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE**

**MERGED STATEMENTS
As of 1/20/2023**

WHY AT-LARGE CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS SHOULD BE ABANDONED

- Residents don't know their City Councilors; don't know who to contact for information, direction, assistance.
- The City Council is isolated or disconnected from the residents.
- Lack of accountability as to whether a City Councilor is/has/will assist or act.
- Residents desire a City Council that knows their neighborhood, shares lived experiences, is seen in their community.

Statements iterated in the Community Outreach effort which included the Charter Review Committee holding information and listening posts at community events, were stated in the on-line City Survey, and are cited in the Bagwell Report which obtained input from 354 Gresham residents.

- City-wide campaigns are expensive. In 2022, six candidates for three Council positions spent a total of \$416,570¹.
- Campaign costs create barriers to entry for potential candidates without access to special interest funding or personal resources.
- In an At-Large system, campaigns are "issue free" and usually determined by the number of signs and mailers a candidate can buy.
- The cost of At-Large elections disadvantages potential minority candidates.²
- Costs limit grassroots campaigning, such as, door-to-door, participation in neighborhood events.
- Historically, the City Council lives in three of 16 Gresham neighborhoods which limits their knowledge of a neighborhood's need.
- The lack of a City Council that residents throughout the community creates the potential for inequity when decisions are made as to how and where to spend taxpayer money.
- Gresham's population has grown in population and geography; from 33,000³ in 1980 to more than 114,000⁴ in 2020 and 14.85 square acres in 1980 to approximately 23.65 square miles in 2020⁵, respectively.
- The City is too large for a candidate to canvas all residents and too large for a City Council to have knowledge of the needs of the entire community.

¹ Oregon Secretary of State, Elections Division, ORESTAR

² Citation Needed.

³ Portland State University, Center for Population Research, 1980 U.S. Census

⁴ Portland State University, Center for Population Research, 2020 U.S. Census

⁵ City of Gresham, GIS

WHY DISTRICTS ARE PREFERRED

- Allows residents to know their Councilor and hold them accountable.
- Councilor has personal knowledge of District residents needs and wants. Shared experiences.
- Districts bring democracy down to the neighborhood level.
- Promotes debate of issues.
- Promotes grassroots campaigning. Limits influence of money in elections.
- Underfunded candidates will have an easier time getting elected.
- Lowers election costs.
- Lowers barriers to entry for historically marginalized individuals.
- Potential to increase diversity of representation for people of color and historically underserved communities.
- Districts dilute the effects of special interest money and power.
- Localized knowledge is only guaranteed by having localized leadership.

DRAWBACKS OF DISTRICTS

WHY TBD DISTRICTS ARE PREFERRED

2021-2023 CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE**STATUS OF CHARTER AMENDMENTS**

As of January 20, 2023

PROPOSED AMENDMENT	ASSIGNED TO	SUBCOMMITTEE ACTION	CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE ACTION	DATE APPROVED
DISTRICTS	SUBCOMMITTEE	PENDING 1/20/2023		
VOTING SYSTEMS	SUBCOMMITTEE	APPROVED 11/30/2023	CONSIDERED, WITH AMENDMENT, 12/12/2022	Motion passed on a vote of 8-yes, 0-no, 2-absent.
GENDER NEUTRAL PRONOUNS	DANA STROUD	APPROVED BY UNANIMOUS CONSENT 1/04/2023	TO BE CONSIDERED 1/30/2023	
ELECTED CITY AUDITOR	JACK ARDNER	APPROVED 1/11/2023	TO BE CONSIDERED 1/30/2023	
NON-DISCRIMINATION STATEMENT	DANA STROUD			
DELETE 60% CHARTER AMENDMENT REQUIREMENT	JOSEPH ANDAYA	TO BE CONSIDERED 1/25/2023		

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE

MEETING DATES

FEBRUARY 2023 – ALL MEETINGS BEGIN AT 1:00 P.M.

FEBRUARY 1

FEBRUARY 8

FEBRUARY 15—Member conflict. Alternative is February 14.

FEBRUARY 22—Member conflict. Alternative is February 23. Tentatively, this is the last Subcommittee meeting.