

CHARTER REVIEW

Edition 2, May 2005

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NEW YORK CITY charter REVISION COMMISSION

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

This newsletter is designed to provide a brief review of the Commission's latest activities and upcoming meetings. The Charter Revision Commission's work is now entering a new phase. After holding public hearings in all five boroughs, featuring testimony from experts in various areas, elected officials and members of the public, the Commission will begin to move forward in several key areas.



Ester Fuchs, Ph.D.
*Charter Commission
Chair*

At the same time, the Commission will also give careful consideration to proposals raised during the public hearings – as well as to ideas that continue to be raised through the Commission's extensive outreach process. I would like to take this opportunity, once again, to thank all those who have taken part in the charter revision process, and encourage all New Yorkers to join us.

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In May, the Commission will hold a series of public meetings to discuss the public testimony and various proposals. At the end of May, the Commission expects to issue its preliminary proposals.

The Commission will hold a series of public hearings in June in order to hear feedback from the public – an invaluable part of the charter revision process – on its preliminary proposals. Through this newsletter, the website, and our reports, we will keep New Yorkers apprised of our efforts to design proposals that will improve the performance of New York City's government.

Ester Fuchs, Ph.D.

Ester R. Fuchs, [Chair](#)
Dall Forsythe, [Vice Chair](#)
Stephen J. Fiala, [Secretary](#)

Robert Abrams
Curtis L. Archer
Lilliam Barrios-Paoli
Amalia V. Betanzos
David Chen
Anthony Crowell
Stanley E. Grayson
Mary McCormick
Stephanie Palmer
Jennifer Raab

About the Commissioners

Amalia Victoria Betanzos is President of Wildcat Service Corporation, a non-profit employment program. Formerly, she was a Commissioner of the Department of Youth Services and an Executive Secretary to Mayor John Lindsay, and a member of four previous Charter Revision Commissions.

David Chen is the Executive Director of the Chinese-American Planning Council and is the founding Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Chung Pak Local Development Corporation.

Anthony Crowell is Special Counsel to Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, and a former Executive Director and General Counsel to several previous Charter Revision Commissions. He is an adjunct Professor at Brooklyn and New York Law Schools.

Stanley E. Grayson is the President and Chief Operating Officer of M.R. Beal & Company. He was a former Managing Director and Director of Prudential Securities Public Finance Department. Prior to his investment-banking career, Mr. Grayson held several senior positions within New York City government, including Deputy Mayor for Finance and Economic Development, Finance Commissioner and Chief Executive Officer of the New York City Industrial Development Agency.

Bios on remaining Commissioners will appear in the next newsletter. Please refer to March edition for other Commissioner bios.

Expert Forums

The following is a summary of the discussions at the Commission's three expert forums. Transcripts of these forums are on the Commission's web site at www.nyc.gov/charter.

March 7, 2005 – Administrative Justice

Panelists: James Brown, Esq.; Ronald Goldbrenner, Esq.; Preston Niblack, Deputy Director, New York City Independent Budget Office; Betsy Plevan, President, Association of the Bar of the City of New York

Discussion

Panelists generally supported creating an administrative justice coordinator to increase coordination among the City's administrative tribunals. They suggested the creation of such a position was a necessary first step to assuring appropriate uniform standards and greater coordination among the City's administrative tribunals. The experts also supported the creation of a uniform code of ethics for the City's 500-plus administrative law judges and hearing officers.

March 23, 2005 – Fiscal Stability

Panelists: Dr. Charles Brecher, Professor of Public and Health Administration, Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University; Ronnie Lowenstein, Director, New York City Independent Budget Office; James Parrott, Deputy Director and Chief Economist, Fiscal Policy Institute; Marcia Van Wagner, Deputy Comptroller for Budget, Office of the New York City Comptroller

Discussion

Panelists discussed provisions of the Financial Emergency Act for the City of New York (FEA) that the Commission should consider importing into the Charter. There was consensus among the experts that the Charter should require the financial planning practices mandated by the FEA, including GAAP budget balance at the end of the fiscal year, quarterly modification of the four-year financial plan and restrictions on short-term indebtedness. The panel also debated the value of a State financial control board that could impose sanctions on the City for failing to comply with such practices.

April 4, 2005 – Agency Effectiveness & Accountability

Panelists: Greg Brooks, Deputy Comptroller for Policy, Audit, Accountancy and Contracts, Office of the New York City Comptroller; Barbara Cohn, Vice President, Fund for the City of New York; Jay Fountain, Assistant Director of Research (Retired), Governmental Accounting Standards Board; Dr. Dennis Smith, Professor of Public Policy, Wagner Graduate School of Public Service, New York University; Jack Ukeles, President, Ukeles Associates

Discussion

Panelists discussed the City's performance-based management and reporting system present in the Charter. They stated that the City has been a leader in the field of performance-based management and reporting and applauded the recent improvements made to the Mayor's Management Report, a central document in the reporting system. There was, however, a consensus that the City should take advantage of best practices from other state and local governments, as well as recent technological advances not available when many of these documents were introduced into the Charter in 1989.

Notice of Public Meetings

As these are public meetings, not public hearings, the public will have the opportunity to observe, but not testify.

Tuesday, May 3, 2005, 7:00 PM

St. Francis College, Callahan Center, 182 Remsen St., Brooklyn Heights. Located between Court and Clinton Streets in Brooklyn Heights, St. Francis College is accessible by public transportation. Take the 2, 3 or the 4, 5 line to Borough Hall; the A, C, or F lines to Jay Street/Borough Hall; or the M or R lines to Court Street. For more information on accessing this location, call (718)522-2300.

Monday May 16, 2005, 7:00 PM

Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital of New York-Presbyterian, 3959 Broadway, 1st Floor Conference Room. Located at 165th Street and Broadway, New York-Presbyterian is accessible by public transportation. Take the A or C to 168th St. The facility is three blocks away. For more information on accessing this location, call (212)305-5437.

Wednesday, May 25, 2005, 7:00 PM

Spector Hall, 22 Reade Street, 1st Floor. Located between Broadway and Centre Street in Lower Manhattan, Spector Hall is accessible by public transportation. The 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, A, C, J, M, R, W, and Z trains are all within a five-block radius of the facility. For more information on accessing this location, call (212)720-3300.

Individuals requesting spoken or sign language interpreters for any of these public meetings should contact Brian Geller at (212)788-2952 five (5) business days prior to the Public Meeting. TDD users should call Verizon Relay Services.

To contact the Commission by telephone, please call (212)676-2060; to communicate via email, please write to charter@dcas.nyc.gov, or by mail:

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To sign up for email updates of upcoming Charter Revision Commission meetings, as well as other CRC related news, please visit:

www.nyc.gov/charter/signup