



MINUTES FOR THE JULY 22, 2024 HEARING OF THE NEW YORK CITY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION 2024

A duly noticed meeting of the New York City Charter Revision Commission 2024 was held at the Queens Public Library Central Library in Queens, New York at 5:00 p.m. on July 22, 2024.

The Chair, Carlo Scissura, presided at the meeting. The Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 5:08 p.m. Also present were the following members of the Commission:

- Dr. Hazel N. Dukes¹
- Kyle Bragg
- Ruben Díaz Jr.
- Lorraine Grillo
- Christopher B. Lynch
- Stephanie McGraw
- Max Rose²
- Jackie Rowe-Adams
- Rabbi Chaim Steinmetz³

Introductions of the commissioners present were made.

The Commission held a public hearing during which it heard testimony from the public concerning any comments, proposals, and recommendations for possible revisions to the New York City Charter.

¹ Attended via teleconference

² Attended via teleconference

³ Attended via teleconference

Crystal Hudson, City Council Member for the 35th District, testified in support of the expansion of advice and consent over mayoral appointments and placing it on the ballot for referendum.

Joann Ariola, City Council Member for the 32nd District, testified in support of placing New York City's sanctuary city status on the ballot for referendum.⁴

Pierina Ana Sanchez, City Council Member for the 14th District, testified about (1) her concerns regarding the timeframe of the Charter Revision Commission and (2) advocated for the proposal to expand advice and consent. She also expressed her support for New York City's sanctuary city status.

Julie Won and Chi Ossé, City Council Members for the 26th and 36th Districts respectively, testified in support of the Council's proposal to expand of advice and consent.

Jennifer Gutiérrez, City Council Member for the 34th District, repeated her colleague's testimony about the timeframe of the Charter Revision Commission and urged the Commission to delay ballot proposals to the 2025 general election.

Sandy Nurse, City Council Member for the 37th District, testified about (1) her concerns regarding the timeframe of the Charter Revision Commission and (2) her support for expanding advice and consent and placing it on the ballot for referendum. Commissioner Lynch inquired about the number of public hearings before advice and consent was formally proposed. Council Member Nurse admitted there was only one hearing but stated this was the general procedure.

Shaun Abreu, City Council Member for the 7th District, testified in response to Commissioner Díaz Jr.'s question of whether the expansion of advice and consent would result in an imbalance of powers between the City Council and the Mayor's Office. Council Member Abreu

⁴ Testified remotely

stated the Mayor still has the ultimate power and the City Council has not rejected any of the Commissioners proposed by the Mayor thus far.

Shekar Krishnan, City Council Member for the 25th District, testified in opposition to the proposal for increased public input on legislation concerning public safety, stating that the Council already allows for public input. He further testified in support of expanding advice and consent and stated that no questions should be put on the ballot for referendum.

Shahana Hanif, City Council Member for the 39th District, testified in opposition to the Charter Revision Commission's preliminary report recommendations to require more public input on legislation concerning public safety. She further testified regarding (1) her support for expanding advice and consent and (2) retaining New York City's sanctuary city status.

Alexa Avilés and Chris Banks, City Council Members for the 38th and 42nd Districts respectively, testified their support of expanding advice and consent and New York City's sanctuary city status.

Jeffrey Baker, the Deputy Chief of Staff for Legislation and Policy at the New York City Council, testified in support of expanding advice and consent and stated that the City Council is always available to hear public input on proposed legislation. Mr. Baker also stated public hearings are not required. He also criticized the timeframe of the Charter Revision Commission and the transparency of mayoral policies, agency decisions and the Commission's final report which does not allow the public to comment. Chair Scissura repeated that the Commission was independent and transparent, citing the Commission has held 15 public hearings in which over 200 people testified and over 700 have submitted written testimony. Executive Director Sabino stated she had reached out to City Council Members prior to this hearing to testify.

Ariel Amaja proposed various technological updates regarding ad revenue and cybersecurity on MTA wifi, LinkNYC portals, and the 311 app.

Christopher Leon Johnson testified in support of repealing (1) New York City’s sanctuary city status and (2) the “How Many Stops Act.”

Phil Wong, Yanling Zhang, John Song, and Albin Lepiz all testified in support of repealing New York City’s sanctuary city status.

Airenakhue B. Omoragban opposed placing New York City’s sanctuary city status on the ballot for referendum, stating that it was outside the Charter Revision Commission’s purview.

Dorethea Willis, Theresa M. Racine, Mary A. Ruane, and Thomas Willis also testified in support of repealing New York City’s sanctuary city status and placing it on the ballot for referendum.

Obi Afriyie, a Community Organizer for the Criminal Justice NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, Inc., testified about his concerns regarding the Commission’s timeframe and outreach efforts.

Vienna Levitan, Sam Esposito, Ying Tan, and Tammi Zorros testified in support of repealing New York City’s sanctuary city status and placing it on the ballot for referendum.

Jeremy Woodoff, on behalf of the Victorian Society New York, proposed granting the Landmarks Preservation Commission sole authority in designating and modifying scenic landmarks. Currently, authority is shared between the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the Public Design Commission.⁵

Linda Lam and John Schaffer echoed prior testimony and testified their support of reviewing New York City’s sanctuary city status and placing it on the ballot for referendum.⁶

⁵ Testified remotely

⁶ Testified remotely

Sarita Daftary testified in opposition to the Charter Revision Commission’s preliminary report recommendations to require more public input in legislation concerning public safety. Lastly, she stated that more oversight was needed in New York City jails.⁷

Phyllis Inzerillo, Co-President of the Howard Beach Lindenwood Civic, testified in support of repealing New York City’s sanctuary city status and placing it on the ballot for referendum.⁸

Sally Wong and Sally Ann repeated prior testimony supporting the repeal of New York City’s sanctuary city status and placing it on the ballot for referendum.⁹

Mona Davids, Founder of the School Safety Coalition, testified her opposition to (1) a recent City Council bill prohibiting NYPD’s use of a gang database and (2) reiterated her prior opposition to the expansion of advice and consent.¹⁰ She also testified in support of repealing New York City’s sanctuary city status and placing it on the ballot for referendum.

Candace Prince-Modeste, President of the NAACP Jamaica Branch, urged voters to participate in the upcoming elections and thoroughly review all ballot initiatives put forth.¹¹ She further voiced her support for the “How Many Stops Act”.

Barbara McNamara, Co-President of the Howard Beach Lindenwood Civic, testified in support of repealing New York City’s sanctuary city status and placing it on the ballot for referendum.¹²

Aracelia Cook of the 149th Street South Ozone Park Civic Association testified in support of repealing New York City’s sanctuary city status and placing it on the ballot for referendum.¹³

⁷ Testified remotely
⁸ Testified remotely
⁹ Testified remotely
¹⁰ Testified remotely
¹¹ Testified remotely
¹² Testified remotely
¹³ Testified remotely

Dr. Melissa Inniss, Operating Committee Coordinator for St. Ann’s Church for the Deaf proposed (1) adding language to the Charter that specifically references the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and its protections, (2) recognizing American Sign Language (ASL) as a designated city language so commonly distributed public materials are required to be translated into ASL, and (3) creating a New York City Commission to provide guidance, support, and ADA enforcement for individuals with hearing disabilities.¹⁴

Electra Holmes testified to urge the Commission to not act on the issue of New York City’s sanctuary city status to the next election cycle.¹⁵

Michael Sisitzky, Assistant Policy Director at the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU), testified to his concerns about the deadline to submit written public testimony for the Charter Revision Commission.¹⁶

After hearing from all those members of the public in attendance who wished to speak, the Chair closed the public hearing.

The Chair made a motion to adopt the minutes of the July 8th, July 9th, and July 11th meetings of the Commission. The motion was thereafter adopted unanimously by all the Commission members present.

A motion was made by Chair Scissura to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioners Bragg, Grillo, and Rowe-Adams and thereafter adopted unanimously by all Commission members present.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hamza Suhail, New York City Charter Revision Commission

¹⁴ Testified remotely

¹⁵ Testified remotely

¹⁶ Testified remotely