



MINUTES FOR THE JUNE 17, 2024 HEARING OF THE NEW YORK CITY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

A duly noticed meeting of the New York City Charter Revision Commission 2024 was held in NYC Health+Hospitals/Lincoln Hospital in the Bronx, at 5:00 p.m. on June 17, 2024.

The Chair, Carlo Scissura, presided at the meeting. The Chair called the meeting to order at approximately 5:20 p.m. Also present were the following members of the Commission:

- Dr. Hazel N. Dukes
- Ken Ngai¹
- Kyle Bragg
- Christopher B. Lynch²
- Stephanie McGraw
- Jackie Rowe-Adams

Introductions of the commissioners present were made.

The Commission held a public forum during which it heard testimony from experts concerning any comments, proposals, and recommendations for possible revisions to the New York City Charter regarding government and election reform. The Commission then heard testimony from the public concerning any comments, proposals, and recommendations for possible revisions to the New York City Charter.

Rafael Salamanca, Councilmember for the 17th District and Chair of the Land Use Committee, urged the Commission to amend the City Charter to grant sanitation police

¹ Attended via teleconference.

² Attended via teleconference.

enforcement authority on all city-owned land to combat illegal dumping. He emphasized that this change would greatly increase quality of life for New York citizens. Commissioner Rowe-Adams asked for Mr. Salamanca's input on land-use. Mr. Salamanca emphasized there is a need for affordable housing.

Susan Lerner, Executive Director of Common Cause NYC and Chair of Rank the Vote NYC, testified on election reform options such as open primaries or partially closed primaries that would allow unaffiliated voters to participate in primary elections, but suggested the Charter Revision Commission defer election reform to a later commission due to time constraints. She also voiced support for ranked choice voting and consolidating elections to even numbered years. Commissioner Bragg agreed there is a need to increase voter turnout. Chair Scissura noted any election reform may involve state and federal issues.

Ben Weinberg, Director of Public Policy at Citizens Union, recommended amending the Charter to establish minimum timelines for future Charter Revision Commissions. Weinberg also expressed support for ranked choice voting, consolidating elections to even-numbered years to address racial age gaps and achieve cost savings, and open primaries to allow unaffiliated voters to vote in primary elections to increase voter turnout.

John Ketcham, Legal Policy Fellow and Director of Cities Policy at the Manhattan Institute, testified on election reform options and expressed support for ranked choice voting. He suggested retaining party names on the ballot and allowing endorsements to appear alongside candidate names. Additionally, he testified to require the Comptroller to publish emergency procurements for review.

Mona Davids testified in opposition of ranked choice voting in City Council elections and the expansion of City Council's advice and consent over mayoral appointments. She also called

for the removal of the Public Advocate's office, citing cost concerns, and advocated for increased police presence to enhance public safety in the Bronx.

Melissa Mark-Viverito, former City Council Speaker, testified in support of ranked choice voting, stating that it significantly increased voter turnout and diversity in representation.³

Frank Morano testified in support of ranked choice voting and recommended expanding it to general elections. He also suggested eliminating the signature requirement for candidates to get on the ballot and instead proposed requiring a filing fee of 1% of the salaried office position.⁴

Claire Stottlemeyer, an attorney for the Legal Aid Society, testified on the need to increase voting participation among incarcerated individuals to allow them a full and fair opportunity to vote.⁵ She proposed establishing voting sites in all New York jails and amending section 1057(a) to address the needs of incarcerated individuals by ensuring timely submission of voter registration forms.

Lena Cohen, Senior Manager of United Neighborhood, testified in support of the need to improve the City's human services program contract procurement process. She proposed amending the Charter to set timeframes for each phase of the procurement process to ensure timely payment to non-profits and continued services to all New York citizens in need. She also testified in support of ranked choice voting stating it increased voter turnout.⁶

Gloria Kim, testified on the need to enhance the contracting services process for human service program contracts. She proposed setting timelines for the Procurement Policy Board and mandating that they publish reports for increased transparency. She also urged the Commission to

³ Testified remotely

⁴ Testified remotely

⁵ Testified remotely

⁶ Testified remotely

grant MOCS authority over agency contracts, and to allow vendors to collect interest from the City for payment delays under City contracts.⁷

Pedro Suarez testified in support of the even distribution of methadone clinics throughout the boroughs, and empowering communities to have greater control over the organizations and businesses permitted in their areas.⁸ He also testified to address the issue of unlicensed street vendors, urging the Commission to determine accountability for the unsustainable number of unlicensed vendors, and possibly providing guidance for the vendors to obtain licenses.

Roxanne Delgado, member of Community Board 11, testified in support of increased police presence to enhance public safety and called for the removal of the Public Advocate's office.⁹ She urged the Commission to consider non-partisan elections or to expand ranked choice voting to general elections. Additionally, she proposed allowing the District Managers of Community Boards to be elected by the public rather than by the board alone, arguing that this would improve accountability and representation.

Michael Darryl-Torres testified against City Council's advice and consent over mayoral appointments and against further curtailment of executive power.

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

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Hamza Suhail
New York City Charter Revision Commission

⁷ Testified remotely

⁸ Testified remotely

⁹ Testified remotely