

LEE COUNTY CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

FINAL REPORT

MAY, 2016

The Lee County Charter Review Commission held its organizational meetings on March 11 and March 26 of 2015. It was at this time it was agreed that the Commission would conduct a minimum of five (5) public meetings, one in each of the County Commission Districts. Those meetings were:

23 April 2015 Ida Baker High School

28 May 2015 Florida Southwestern State College

25 June 2015 Estero High School

23 July 2015 Mariner High School

27 August 2015 East Lee County High School

Public notice was given of these meetings on the County's web site as well as in the local papers and by direct contact with various community organizations. Public input was received at all of the meetings. The Commission also conducted public meetings to discuss the many suggestion that the public had put forth for our consideration. Four of these meeting were held, between 24 September and 5 November 2015, in the Community Meeting Room on the first floor of the County Office Building. At these meetings we also took public comment. Items that were discussed were:

Election of the County Manager

Five (5) single member commission districts

Seven (7) single member districts

Hybrid Five (5) single member and Two (2) at large districts

Non-Partisan Elections for all Elected County Officials

Term limits for various County Elected Offices

Only Ten (10) vote needed by the Charter Commission to bypass the County Commission and go directly to the ballot

Creation Of a County Ethics Commission

Creation of the Office of Inspector General for the County

For the latter two proposals we heard from representatives of Ethics Boards and Inspector General from Dade, Broward and Palm Beach Counties . These meetings were 19 November and 3 December 2015. Unfortunately these proposals came to us late in the process. While they had great interest and support by members of the Commission, there was not sufficient time to explore implementation of these concepts.

It was decided by the Commission that a preliminary vote to see which of the proposals had enough support amongst the Commission to move forward . It was agreed that a majority vote of eight (8) to move forward for greater consideration. The date of that vote was 7 January 2016.

Only two of the proposals received the required 8 votes. The 10 vote proposal and the Hybrid Election Proposal (5 single member 2 at large). County staff was asked to prepare ballot language for the two proposals .

We met again on 11 February 2016 to approve the language prepared by staff and to set the next public hearings , as required by the County Charter, prior to our final vote. these meetings were as follows:

18 February 2016 North Fort Myers Recreation Center

25 February 2016 Estero Community Center

3 March 2016 Community Meeting Room County Office Building

The Final Vote of the Commission was held in the Community Meeting Room on 10 March 2016.

No proposal received sufficient votes to be presented to the County Commission , nine (9) or to go directly onto the ballot twelve (12).

The Hybrid Plan passed with 8 votes (a majority) but not the required 9 Votes

The 10 vote proposal was defeated on receiving 6 votes .

The Commission heard from 90 people at our public meetings.