

**CITY OF EAST PROVIDENCE  
RHODE ISLAND  
JOURNAL CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION  
May 10, 2023**

**Council Chamber, City Hall, 145 Taunton Avenue, East Providence, Rhode Island 02914**

Present: Commissioners Valerie Perry, Bruce Rogers, Julie Silva, Michael Sullo, Joseph Tavares, Manuel Vinhateiro, Chairman Marc Furtado

Absent: Commissioner John Faria

Also in Attendance: City Solicitor Michael Marcello

Chairman Furtado called the meeting to order at 6:32 P.M.

**PUBLIC COMMENT & COMMUNICATIONS**

Richard Ferreira of Riverside, Rhode Island is present and speaks on Term Limits and a Recall provision.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Approval of Minutes**

1. April 19, 2023
2. April 26, 2023

It was noted that the minutes had not been forwarded to the Commission members.

*Mr. Vinhateiro moved to table the approval of minutes. Mr. Rogers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

**B. Vote to amend meeting schedule**

Chairman Furtado noted that there is concern about the Commission meeting weekly because of the billing issues related to the Solicitors' attendance at commission meetings. It is mentioned that the charter amendments will not be on the ballot until the 2024 election, and there will be sufficient time to get the work done by meeting less. It is also mentioned that the amount of meetings can be changed if it becomes necessary.

*Mr. Rogers moved to meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Sullo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **C. Vote for Resolution to City Council on up or down vote for Charter amendments**

Chairman Furtado spoke on the resolution which is essentially an MOU with the City Council. He asks that it be tabled until the next meeting...

*Mr. Rogers moved to table the Resolution. Mr. Vinhateiro seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **D. Sec. 2-1 Number Selection and term City Council (Joseph Tavares)**

*Mr. Tavares moved to provide for additional at large Council members. Julie Silva seconded the motion for discussion.*

*Mr. Tavares moved to table the item. Mr. Rogers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **E. Sec. 11-5 Non-Partisan ballot (Joseph Tavares)**

Mr. Tavares suggested that East Providence have partisan elections.

After some discussion, *Mr. Tavares moved that the Commission consider sending a request to the City Council to put this item on the ballot at the next election.*

After discussion, *Mr. Tavares moved to table the item. Mr. Rogers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

The Commission began to review the Charter, including proposed changes from the Administration (noted by \*) and Councilman Lawson.

### **Article I Basic Provisions**

1-1 Change the word “town” to “city” (also in Preamble)

First sentence – change “not” to “now” \*

Strike “and Providence Plantations”

### **Article II City Council**

2-2 - First sentence – add “shall” after Council members\*

Eliminate brackets around “a.”

2-4 - Powers of the Council President: To set the City Council agenda with the assistance of city clerk and law department. \*

*Put on hold until the city clerk issue resolved.*

2-6 - Change City Clerk to Canvassing Clerk

2-7 - Conflicts with 11-14

2-8 - A quorum of (3) members of the city Council shall be necessary for the transaction of business, but a smaller number may adjourn from time to time. \*

2-9 - Powers

(2) Establish administrative departments ~~and distribute the work of divisions.~~

Explanation: Conflicts with 3-12 \*

2-10 Chairman Furtado read a note from Councilman Lawson who suggested the Council have the right to reach out to Department Heads for information.

After discussion, Chairman Furtado suggests leaving the wording as is.

*Mr. Vinhateiro moved to table the remainder of Article II until the next meeting. Mr. Sullo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **ADJOURNMENT**

*Mr. Rogers moved to adjourn. Mr. Sullo seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting adjourned at 9:36 p.m.

Attest:

Valerie A. Perry  
Secretary

Approved: June 21, 2023

**Resolution Requesting the East Providence City Council to Approve or Disapprove all Charter Commission Recommendations through a Clean Vote**

WHEREAS, the East Providence City Council Approved a Resolution to place a ballot question to create a Charter Commission on June 16, 2020 and;

WHEREAS, the Resolution was approved and subsequently passed by the people of East Providence in the November 2022 General Election and;

WHEREAS, the Charter Commission serves an advisory body to the City Council to make recommendations on Charter amendments and;

WHEREAS, despite this function, the majority of Charter Commission members derive their legitimacy through direct elected representation from their constituents and;

WHEREAS, the City Council has direct representation on the Commission through two (2) of its appointed members to make the Commission an inherently collaborative body and;

WHEREAS, both elected bodies value transparency and the innate importance of the democratic process;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the East Providence Charter Commission and the East Providence City Council will adhere to the following process to approve or disapprove a Charter amendment recommended by the Commission:

**Section 1.**

The Charter Commission shall consider and make recommendations on the City Charter, including all recommendations requested by the City Council or its members, and transmit them to the City Council immediately following passage by the Commission so the City Council may take action on them.

**Section 2.**

The City Council shall consider and vote to only approve or disapprove each recommendation in its entirety, i.e., take an “up or down vote” at the Council’s earliest convenience. If the Council chooses to disapprove of a recommendation by the Commission, it will state its reasoning in a medium of its choice and give the Commission a chance to revise its recommendation and transmit it again. If the Council does not approve of the Commission’s second recommendation, the process may repeat. If at any point, the Commission chooses not to pursue action on a section of the Charter, disapproved by the Council or not, the Council shall not take independent action to make changes to any part of the Charter, nor shall the Council make retroactive changes to sections already approved by the Council unless those changes come at the recommendation of the law department.

Passed and Adopted by the East Providence Charter Commission on this 10th day of May 2023.

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By: Marc Furtado Chair

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_

By: Valerie Perry, Secretary