



CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH

City Council Interoffice Communication

To: Honorable City Council Members
From: **Keith Bohr, Mayor**
Date: December 4, 2008
Subject: ***Council Request - Charter Amendment Committee***

With the advent of the city's 100 anniversary, it seems an appropriate time to consider undertaking a formal review of the City Charter. The City Charter was originally adopted in 1937. There have been two minor amendments in the last 24 years: The addition of Measure C (Section 612) in 1992 and Infrastructure Funding (Section 617) in 2002.

For discussion purposes below I have outlined just a few of the potential amendments that might be considered. City Council, staff and the community as a whole of course may have other worthy considerations to add to the mix:

Section 600: provides old fiscal year (July 1-June 30) which has been subsequently changed by ordinance

Section 609: prohibits imposition of real estate transfer tax, which most cities utilize as a positive generator of revenue that only takes place upon transfer of property and therefore does not impose an annual burden upon any business or person's budget.

Section 612: this is the "Measure C" section, which ought to at least be amended to exclude public infrastructure items like water pumps or sewer lift stations, and park or beach related amenities like parking lots, bathrooms, pedestrian walkways and/or required storage facilities etc. Further, the \$100,000 cost limit, should be increased to say \$250,000 with an added annual increase indexed to the CPI. I would recommend sitting down with the original authors of Measure C to establish what updates they could support.

Section 614: Twenty-five thousand dollar limit was probably adopted by last Charter revision in 1966 and should be similarly increased.

Staff has sought information from other cities that have recently undergone a charter review. The approach varies, but most often there is a reviewing body made up of citizens who are assisted through the process by a facilitator.

Based on these models, it is suggested that the Charter Amendment Committee be made up of eleven (11) members, one each appointed by the seven City Council members, one appointed by the Chamber of Commerce, and three appointed at-large by an application and interview process.

In the responses received, both Burbank and Culver City noted that they had utilized the services of a professor from Cal State Fullerton, Dr. Raphe Sonenshein, to facilitate the process. Culver City said they, "will honestly attest that we could not have completed this task without the expertise and leadership of Dr. Sonenshein."

With these thoughts in mind, I would like to make the following recommendation:

1. That staff prepare a presentation of aforementioned Charter Amendment Process for the City Council to consider at a Study Session. The recommendation for consideration being to consider establishing a Charter Amendment Committee to make recommendations to the City Council to be placed on the ballot in November of 2010. Please note that the committee makes recommendations to the City Council on what proposed amendments might be put on the ballot, but then the City Council ultimately decides which amendments actually will be on the ballot, with the Huntington Beach voters ultimately deciding which amendments are adopted if any.