

**Unapproved Meeting Minutes  
Afton Charter Commission  
March 27, 2008**

**PRESENT:** John Barclay, Anthony Berg, Julianne Berg, Bonnie Blackley, Mark Borgwardt (7:08), Lynn Farley, Michael Frichol, Kathleen McGinn, Deborah Nelson (7:07), Daniel Oehlke (7:06), Patricia Snyder and Carol Wiessner.

- 1. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair McGinn called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.
- 2. ROLL CALL:** Snyder performed roll call.
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Wiessner moved to approve the minutes as presented. Seconded by A. Berg. Motion passed (9-0).
- 4. TREASURER REPORT:** No receipts were submitted and Barclay had no report.
- 5. OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. City Council Web Link request – Tony Berg**

Berg reported that both he and Deb Nelson addressed the CC at their last meeting to request that a link be created from the City web page to the new ACC site. The request was denied on a 3-2 vote, with the recommendation that the request be resubmitted at a later date, when the charter is complete. Discussion followed and it was suggested that the commission may want to consider sending out postcards citywide with the website information.

**B. Web Site – Mike Frichol**

Frichol reported that the website is up and running. Snyder and McGinn agreed to provide copies of past meeting minutes and agendas for posting. Nelson agreed to contact Rachel Carlson with the LMC for basic information they may be able to provide. McGinn also agreed to temporarily handle queries addressed to the site and will provide question and answer submittals to the commission for review at each meeting. Other items suggested for posting include a list of Minnesota charter cities and their links and commonly asked questions and answers.

**C. Charter Discussion -**

Question of timing was addressed, and whether or not the commission plans to have a charter proposal on the upcoming November ballot. Members were asked to provide final comment on whether or not to proceed. Snyder stated that she was uncomfortable proceeding due to her concerns for potential abuse and fiscal irresponsibility. She proposed that work on the charter be put on hold and

a subcommittee be formed to draft an ordinance or policy for CC consideration that would address initiative, referendum and bonding.

Snyder's arguments included costs of special elections, complexity of drafting ordinances, utilization of existing infrastructure and resources such as planning commission, zoning administrator, city attorney and planner, and citywide surveys as an alternative to special elections. She cited a Pioneer Press article dated 3/5/08 concerning a charter town in Vermont that passed an indictment against Bush and Cheney brought about by petition and expressed her concern that matters unrelated to the city could be brought forth at city taxpayers expense. She also read an email from Rachel Carlson at the LMC answering her inquiry into whether petitioners could be made to pay for the costs of special elections.

Discussion followed with debate over the type of petitions that can be brought, what controls the commission would have, the process of how a petition moves forward, whether or not we want or need a charter, reasons other cities dropped charters, potential expenses, and individual expectations of appointees to the commission.

Additional discussion included dissatisfaction, mistrust and turnover of CC, continuity provided by a charter, ability for citizen input and recourse, deflection of issues from 5-member CC, the ability of the CC to overturn ordinances and policies with a simple majority vote, the inability of the CC to amend a charter, costs and liability associated with a charter, the setting of parameters and how to proceed.

A list was started putting forth advantages and disadvantages of proceeding with a charter. Discussion followed concerning what to include in the charter; Met Council wording/slim chance but can't hurt and restrictions on mayor or CC to ask for services, emergency ordinance language for bonding, budget caps, and recall/for criminal convictions and not political reasons.

Discussion continued regarding the form of motion required. Snyder moved that it is not necessary or desirable for the city of Afton to draft a home rule charter. Seconded by J. Berg. Discussion followed with Snyder stating that a city policy would accomplish the same thing that we have discussed and is an avenue worth pursuing before we continue with drafting a charter. Other comments included the need for more specific information to move forward, concern about a changing city council, how a charter would affect all city councils, ability of the residents to vote for or against the draft, and the intention to work out the details as we move forward. Motion failed (2-9).

McGinn asked the group how they would like to proceed with drafting the charter so she could organize an agenda for the next meeting. Berg suggested that the commission has already identified some major areas for discussion that might

best be addressed by the group as a whole. McGinn suggested that Initiative and Referendum be the topic of discussion for the next meeting and encouraged members to research the issue utilizing all of the references available to include model charters and other city charters, and to come prepared with a list of what they find acceptable or unacceptable for Afton.

**6. NEW BUSINESS:**

**7. WRAP UP:**

**A. Next meeting** – 7:00 Thursday, April 24, 2008 at St. Peter's.

**B. Agenda items** – Discussion on Initiative and Referendum

**C. Assignments** –

- Research Initiative and Referendum and come prepared with a list of what is acceptable and/or unacceptable for Afton.
- Snyder will check on availability of church for future meetings and provide past meeting minutes to Frichol
- Nelson will check into availability of white board and frame and ask Rachel Carlson at LMC for general information to post on website
- McGinn will provide Frichol with past meeting agendas and respond to any inquiries to the website

**8. ADJOURN:** Motion to adjourn by McGinn. Seconded by A. Berg. Motion passed (11-0). Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

**SUBMISSIONS:**

- "Points of clarification from the February 28<sup>th</sup> 2008 Charter Commission meeting" submitted by Jane Pahl
- Corcoran Charter Commission Press Release provided by Jon Kingstad
- Pioneer Press article dated 3/5/08 on Bush-Cheny Indictment
- Email from Rachel Carlson at LMC dated 3/7/08 regarding costs of special elections

Respectfully submitted,  
Pat Snyder, Secretary