

To: Citizens of Afton
From: Afton Charter Commission

What is the City of Afton Charter Commission?

Overview. Minnesota statutes allow the constituents of individual cities the right to select their form of city government. For instance, Afton's present form is a statutory city, governed by MN state statutes. The charter form of government is somewhat analogous to having a city constitution. The members of the Charter Commission feel there are some advantages to changing to a charter city form. The Commission was formed through a petition process and is working to allow the citizens to vote on whether to adopt a charter form. BEFORE ANY CHANGE IN AFTON'S FORM OF GOVERNMENT CAN OCCUR, IT MUST BE VOTED ON AT A GENERAL ELECTION.

Formation. A group of Afton citizens circulated and sent a petition to the Chief District Judge asking that a Charter Commission be formed to consider this type of government. The Judge appointed 15 members from a diverse group of volunteer applicants. We soon found that we had some things in common. First, we all care deeply about our hometown of Afton. Second, we share a degree of dissatisfaction with some aspects of the workings and dealings of our city government over the past several years. Finally, we all welcome the opportunity to discuss the specifics of our local government in a calm and rational manner.

Concerns.

- The process, or lack of process, for pushing through the \$4 million bonding bill without benefit of a public vote.
- A proposed double-digit city budget increase for one year.
- Steep increases in lawsuits and legal fees.
- The non-productive, non-cooperative spirit that has hindered the Afton government process for years.
- Direct citizen input on important matters facing the city can sometimes be disregarded.

Solutions. A charter form of government, which maintains most of the aspects of our present system, allows more direct citizen input, and adds two important processes.

- Initiative- Citizen proposed ordinances.
- Referendum- Citizen sponsored repeal of ordinances.

In addition, further checks and balances over local government action can be incorporated into a charter.

More Information. Charter Commission meetings are open to the public. Our web site posts meeting dates, locations, agendas, minutes, sample charters and working drafts. You may contact us via the website with questions that will be answered and posted as public information on the website. We strongly encourage your participation because we want the proposed charter to reflect the input of all concerned citizens.

Comprehensive information meetings for Afton citizens will be held after we have completed the Charter drafting process. We hope to have a proposed charter ready to be considered in the General Election later this year.

Find us at:

www.aftoncharter.org