

CNC June Meeting Minutes – Monday, June 4th 2018

1. The meeting was called to order by President Karen Cunningham at 7 PM at the Clearwater Fire Rescue Training Center
2. Introductions of those present

Officers Reports:

1. **Secretary, Sean Schrader** mentioned that the CNC May minutes had been posted on the website and everyone could view them and reference them there. A motion to approve the May minutes was made by Bill Jonson and it was seconded by David Lilliesand.
2. **Treasurer, Doug Williams** discussed the opportunity that members had to purchase CNC Shirts for \$10 so that they would be supporting the CNC in making the shirt purchase.
3. **Vice-President, JoAnna Siskin** had nothing to report on.
4. **President, Karen Cunningham** discussed the idea for smaller committees within the CNC could be formed. This could include groups such as a media relations committee, conference planning committee, strong mayor committee or any committee that members think could be beneficial to form within the CNC are encouraged to speak/contact Mrs. Cunningham .

Monthly Reports:

1. **Clearwater Police Officer, Selena Hippolyte** encouraged those present to lock their car doors because a recent report found that 63% of car burglaries are a result of cars that are unlocked. In good news, Car burglaries have been reduced by 40%.
 2. **Clearwater Neighborhoods Coordinator, Lawrence Young** gave out a handout to those present summarizing the Conference that the CNC had several months ago. He also discussed the positive turnout that the Drew Street Complete Street survey had and encouraged members to attend the next upcoming Complete Streets Workshop. He also encouraged members to visit 2nd Century Studios in Downtown Clearwater to view the artwork that many have created and have on display there.
1. **Kathryn, City of Clearwater Landscape Architect** gave updates on the project that is currently being completed at Coachmen Ridge Park and how the project is moving along on schedule as planned and it should be completed by November.

Strong Mayor Discussion: This portion of the minutes was graciously composed by Bill Jonson and it gives in specific detail the conversation that was had regarding the strong mayor concept.

Note the following is a transcription of notes taken by Bill Jonson at the meeting and NOT direct quotes. The purpose of this transcription is to facilitate discussion and further clarification. What I wrote down is perhaps what I heard and possibly not what was actually said.

1. Zach Thorn speaking in support of strong mayor
 - a. I moved here when I was two and have lived here ever since
 - b. How did we get here?
 - i. In Clearwater the Charter Review Committee meets every four years. Each time we have reviewed the form of government and as such we have discussed the form of government options.
 - ii. In 2015 the Charter Review Committee was meeting just after the ULI Team Review and the focus was on the Charter changes related to the Coachman Park.
 - iii. A change in government could occur through a citizens' referendum. This could be initiated either by a citizens' petition or the City Council placing it on the ballot.
 - iv. The committee recommended to the Council that a Blue-Ribbon committee review the advantages and disadvantages of a change to strong mayor.
 - v. That didn't happen, so recently approached the Council and they directed the establishment of the Strong Mayor task force to write a charter that the citizens' to vote on.
 - vi. The intent is to have charter language referendum on the upcoming November ballot.
 - c. The timing is a rare opportunity to **not make this change about individuals**. The City Manager has announced that he will be retiring in 2020. This will be the same time that a new Mayor and two council members will be elected.
 - d. The intent is to determine what is the best form of government for the next 20 to 40 years.
 - e. Citizens are welcome to participate in the process by participating in the meetings.
 - f. The Task Force will be looking at checks and balances
 - g. I believe there is a need for a professional manager. The Task Force voted for a Chief Administrative Officer which is similar to a City Manager. It will be required
 - h. The advantage of the strong mayor is increased responsiveness from one person so the citizens can really be heard. The elected mayor can ensure that the individual's voice can be heard.
 - i. Another advantage is that a strong mayor can better represent the City in Regional issues
 - j. This is all about Economic Development and encouraging our kids to want to stay here when they grow up.
 - k. Summary:
 - i. Will still have a professional manager
 - ii. Elected Strong Mayor can be accountable at the ballot box.

- iii. Right now it is hard to get consensus on the Council and to affect positive change
 - iv. Need to incorporate all sections of the city to create a vision that the community can get behind
- 2. Beth Rawlins speaking in support of the Council City Manager form of government – i.e. opposed to the strong mayor
 - a. Background:
 - i. Lived here since she was in elementary school
 - ii. Father was *St. Petersburg Times Clearwater* section editor
 - iii. First experience was as an intern with the City of Clearwater Attorney's office at the time when the COS came here under a different name.
 - iv. She works as
 - 1. President of Florida Business Watch
 - 2. Provides staff support to Florida League of Cities and the Florida League of Mayors composed of both forms of Mayoral government Strong Mayor and Council Manager
 - 3. Staff to state and national - International City County Managers Association
 - 4. Provides assistance to new cities in developing City Charters.
 - b. Intends to speak out against the proposed change to a strong mayor form of government here in Clearwater
 - c. She reported that the proponents of strong mayor submitted to the City a proposed charter that was incomplete and inconsistent. It was an amateur effort and it led to the appointment of the Task Force.
 - d. The history of City Manager form of government dates back to reforming the boss, cronyism, special interest buying votes in local governments. A 1910 report suggested the City Manager form of government with balancing of powers to create a professional city government rather than political
 - e. The elected official needs to be supported by a professional who can manage complex contracts, negotiate labor union contracts, and manage large groups of employees. This person would not ask for support or accept campaign contributions. They would be somebody that could negotiate with FEMA when needed.
 - f. An IBM study found that Council - City Manager form of government is 10% more efficient than the Strong mayor
 - g. The City Manager is more accountable. They can be fired at a council meeting that occurs every two weeks whereas the elected strong mayor is only accountable at the next election. The recall of an elected official is a difficult and lengthy process that doesn't result in accountability.
 - h. 88% of the cities in Florida use Council Manager form of government.
 - i. All Florida Cities in the population range of Clearwater (100k-200k) have Council City Manager Form of government except West Palm Beach.

- j. A city manager serving in a Strong Mayor form of government would lose professional standing and risk their credentialing. When a manager works in a city that isn't recognized by ICMA as a Council-Manager form, their standing in the profession changes. The first thing that suffers is your applicant pool. The best city managers don't want to work in a political job where their authority is granted by the Mayor rather than the charter, so the people willing to work for your city is naturally curtailed. The second thing is that if a manager would choose to work in a SM city, they could lose their eligibility for FCCMA and ICMA membership, which would eventually lead to the loss of their credentialing dependent on the way the charter is written.
 - k. She pointed out that in a strong mayor government, you would not be able to get a Credentialed City Manager as the ICMA code of ethics prohibits one of their members in this form of government.
3. Questions to both speakers:
- a. Why was there no evaluation prior to directing the development of a strong mayor charter? ANS: Until the charter is drafted, you will really not know how to cost out the difference
 - b. Are you implying that St Petersburg or Tampa have cronyism or buying of special rights? ANS: A Strong Mayor has a higher potential for cronyism.
 - c. What is the problem with the Sunshine Law in a Council – City Manager form of government? ANS: In the Strong Mayor form of government the strong mayor (if they are not a member of the council) can talk to all elected officials. Council – City Manager form of government doesn't allow the Mayor or the Council members to talk to each other unless in a public meeting.
 - d. Was there an ethical review of this change? ANS: No
 - e. What is the hurry rushing this through in the summer when many people are out of town? How many people voted in the last election? Shouldn't we be looking at better ways to get representation for all segments of the city? There is not a Councilmember representative from Countryside now. ANS: Trying to use the November election rather than spending \$100 K for a special election next March.
 - f. Looking at the voter choices in the last elections where some were elected without opposition or the choices were without experience, how do we get younger dynamic candidates to run for office. No one runs for the existing poorly paid jobs if they are having to support a family. ANS: The decades of local government history is that people run as a passion to serve their community not to make money. This is the story across the state.
 - g. Are we competing with Tampa and St. Petersburg? ANS: Clearwater is following behind as there is no champion for our city. How do we get the best of both.
 - h. Accountability? ANS: Mayor is accountable every four years. City Manager is accountable every two weeks.
 - i. What is the real problem? ANS: The problem with downtown Clearwater is that one entity owns so much of it. Don't change the form of government to solve a problem that hasn't been articulated.

4. Comments from former Mayors in attendance:
 - a. Mayor Hibbard:
 - i. There are pros and cons for both choices. There is no panacea.
 - ii. It will always come down to the people in either form of government.
 - iii. Need more citizens to be engaged and the Council needs to listen.
 - b. Rita Garvey:
 - i. I thought it worked very well when I was in office.

5. **Vice-President, JoAnna Siskin, Storage Facility Update:** The discussion now continues on to Forward Pinellas on June 13th. She encouraged members there to sign the petition which could be found at skycrestneighbors.com.
6. **Karen Cunningham, President** adjourned the meeting at 8:26 PM

CNC June Minutes respectfully submitted by Sean Schrader