

From: [Anne Pringle](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Public comment
Date: Wednesday, December 22, 2021 12:46:49 PM

Additional public comment:

Thanks, Zack.

I'm not sure what your references is to elected officials having their own staff. Not that I am aware.

Policy initiatives should be drafted by City staff (Planning or Corporation Counsel), not separate paid staff (like Ethan had) or outside lobbyists. I don't recall interactions with "special interests", except for waterfront people (property owners and working waterfront advocates) with whom I, as District 2 Councilor, negotiated zoning changes during a very contentious period (1992-1993). We reviewed policy language that had been drafted by Corporation Counsel and, working with all "interests", I brought back concepts that were fair for all. I kept the Council apprised of what I was doing, described the public policy implications of proposed zoning language in extensive public comments during my presentation to the Council and heard back extensive public comment. Many still consider it one of the most effective public policy undertakings in the last 30 years, avoiding another disruptive referendum on a very complex topic...

I was available to all constituents, whatever their "interests" were. When I left office, one of those constituents, a low-income and working waterfront activist, told me, "You know, Anne, I didn't always agree with your votes, but I know you listened to me when forming your position"... This is what I expect from my elected officials. While I might be disappointed that they don't agree with me, I want to be heard. Neither Brennan (an old friend) or Strimling met that expectation.

I really worry about a structure that isolates the Mayor and Council from other City staff. Access is definitely an issue, but the Chief of Staff proposed by the Governance Committee should **not** be drafting initiatives. The person should **facilitate** drafting by appropriate City staff.

Anne

Sent from my iPad

On Dec 22, 2021, at 7:53 AM, Zachary Barowitz <zbarowitz@portlandmaine.gov> wrote:

Anne,
Thanks for writing and for commenting in depth. In regard to the chief of staff position, I think that elected officials have their own staff in which to confide in. Otherwise, they may be more subject to special interest "friends" (e.g., lobbyists) who are paid to draft policy. How did you handle special interests when you were in office?
Best,

Zack

From: [Anne Pringle](mailto:Anne.Pringle@portlandmaine.gov)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Charter Commission- Governance Comments
Date: Wednesday, December 22, 2021 12:15:47 PM

For the public record:

Governance Committee Members,

As you know, I have been following your work and appreciate your diligence in educating yourselves, inviting people with experience and diverse opinions on the structure of city governance, and listening to the public input, both oral and written. This is important and hard work. Thank you for your commitment!

I was away for your last two meetings and have been trying catch up. I understand that each Committee will be presenting a report to the full Charter Commission tomorrow night, which will further discuss and seek more extensive public comment at a subsequent meeting(s).

I am a former Mayor (elected by the Council), District 2 City Councilor, and now engaged citizen who has, over decades, attended countless City meetings, listened to presentations and comments, and offered what I intended to be constructive comments based on what I learned. I listened to your 12/8 meeting this morning and offer these comments:

1). While I do not agree that the distinction between the position of Mayor and City Manager in the current Charter is not clear, two of the three Elected Mayors declared that they found it ambiguous and sought to expand the role of the Mayor. So that alone is good enough reason to make a very clear distinction between the two roles, but this must be done with great care to avoid future challenge and contention.

2). Clearly, the **Mayor should be the policy leader and the City Manager the Administrator**. But the devil is in the detail in defining these roles, as you discussed last night.

3). **Turning first to the Mayor**, it's important to recognize that the Mayor is one of nine elected City officials, each of whom responsible to his/her constituents (whether they voted or not). Please take care that, in defining the role of the Mayor, you not diminish the role of elected Councilors. Every elected official has an important contribution to make to a well-run city. And remember that each one of them campaigned on issues, not just the Mayor. The Mayor should lead the Council, but not unilaterally set its Agenda.

I like the annual Goal Setting Process (I listened in to it last week). If a Councilor wants to see an issue receive priority (and issues must be prioritized), the case must be made to Council colleagues. As an example, when a former Councilor complained to me in recent years that she could not get other Councilors to support her position on a contentious issue, I asked if she had talked with them, she replied that she "didn't have time". She gained no support for her position. You can't set this out in the Charter; it takes personal investment to establish connections necessary to build support and pass a proposal. My colleagues did not always agree with me, but they listened to me and were open to considering my

perspective on issues, because I reached out to and engaged them... Don't assume this is always the case with elected Mayors!

If agreed, issues brought forward by a Councilor, but not prioritized in the annual goal setting, can be referred to a Committee, perhaps by the Mayor, for consideration as part of a prioritized Committee work. If the Council is not satisfied with progress on the issue identified, a conversation with the Committee Chair would be appropriate and the Mayor could intervene, if necessary. I am not sure this kind of situation belong in the Charter, but should rather be set forth in the Council Rules adopted every year, after public comment.

The Mayor should keep the Council, the other elected officials, informed of what he/she is doing, rather than surprise them by mayoral press conferences, as has happened in the past. I gave the Council regular reports and they knew I was open to questions, comments, even challenges. Again, this kind of expected communication should be in the Council Rules, not the Charter.

It was not mentioned last night, but the Charter should state that the Mayor should chair the Council's Legislative Committee and should be the primary voice of the City in Augusta. This is a very important role for the Mayor. There were two major issue when I was Mayor: changes to the School Funding Formula and Island Secession. I spent a lot of time in Augusta, monitoring Committee work and lobbying legislators and other interested parties. No one ever asked who elected me. I was the Mayor of Portland and speaking on behalf of the largest city in the state...

The Mayor as "deal maker"?? Certainly, the Mayor should be involved in reviewing major projects (what is a "major project"?) but to think the Mayor should be primary deal maker seems a stretch, given potential lack of qualifications. Alternatively, perhaps the Mayor could lead the Council in setting (annual?) guiding principles for development...

4). Now to the **role of the City Manager (CM)**. I agree that the CM should be the city's administrator and hire/fire senior staff, As was pointed out last night, staff turnover every four years could result if an elected Mayor were given the authority to hire/fire/and manage senior staff. The Mayor and Councilors can certainly offer feedback to the CM on performance of senior staff and they do.

I agree that access to senior staff should not be controlled by the CM, but by another intermediary, as suggested last night. More on this below.

I believe that the CM should develop the budget, with direction from the Mayor and Council. More on this below.

The CM should not define policy direction, except by suggesting initiatives, through the Mayor, to the Council for consideration and action. Worthy of discussion is what is meant by "public policy": bike lanes, snow shoveling, etc? Maybe broad categories could be identified, into which fit specific strategies, not all of which require Council action. Perhaps the kind of CM-raised "sustainability" initiatives mentioned last night could fall into this kind of delineation...

I was surprised to hear that the CM apparently does not receive Annual Reviews. This is totally unacceptable. Perhaps the Charter should spell out, at least in general terms, the categories of job performance to be evaluated.

5). **City Budget Roles** Before taking any action to beef up the Mayor's role in the budgeting process, as suggested last night, I think it is essential that the Governance Committee and the full Commission get a briefing on the City budget, its complexity, and how it is developed. The enhanced role proposed for the Mayor would be very time-consuming and distract the person from other equally important roles as a leader (such as legislative advocacy). Alternatively, the CM meets with each Department Head in developing the budget; perhaps the Mayor could also join those meetings.

It is often said that "a city's budget reflects its value and priorities". But this is not true if those values and priorities are not revisited periodically. As it is now, budgets are based on prior year budgets and changes in revenues, not "values and priorities". When revenues fail, the first cuts are to the Parks budget, even though citizens highly value our park system. For years, I have suggested that the Mayor and Council have a "values and priorities" discussion before the budget process begins. The values might not change, but the priorities could... I think this would be a lot more productive process than having the Mayor meet with Department heads and work with them to develop budget proposals, without an overarching framework established by all elected officials.

(As an example, over thirty years ago, CM Bob Ganley made a "commitment" that "no homeless person would go unhoused in Portland". This was clearly a policy issue, not one to be set by the CM. No Council ever endorsed this policy, but it was never questioned as a priority, even as the numbers served grew exponentially over the years, with many people coming from throughout the state and from out-of-state. In its 2022 Goal Setting, the new Council is prioritizing this issue, which has significant budget ramifications.)

Finally, I do agree with the notion of a multi-year budgeting, with specifics of out-year budgets subject to change as conditions change, but at least a general policy direction would be set out.

6). **Chief of Staff** reporting to the Mayor and City Council as gatekeeper and intermediary between the Council and CM in seeking access to staff. I also agree with the roles proposed for the Chief of Staff: constituent services, FOIA requests, posting agendas and materials, assuring adequate support for appointed task forces, etc.

7). **Accountability to the public**. There was no real discussion of what this might mean, beyond providing a public hearing on an issue raised by a member of the public. While seemingly responsive, this could become a nightmare, sapping a lot of Council and Committee time from issues prioritized in a public process, with the opportunity for public comment.

I have come to believe that the Charter should also set out, in addition to the Mayor and CM, the roles and responsibilities of both District and At-Large Councilors, covering topics such as: accessibility to constituents, responsiveness to constituents, attendance at requested meetings, policy focus, etc.

That's it - and that's a lot! Thank for reading and considering this input.

Anne Pringle

Neal Street

From: [Joshua Moss](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Interpreting the Charter - Judicial Branch, not Legislative - checks and balance in government
Date: Wednesday, December 22, 2021 10:47:10 AM

Hey Robert,

I was wondering if you had a quick second to explain what I read in the Pheonix some more? I would hope that it would be legal experts and a court of law interpreting the Charter as written, rather than appointed people. I think that this is an important check and balance. You are essentially a member of an elected legislature, and interpretation of your laws should come from a different branch of government. Do you see a conflict here?

thanks,
Josh

From: [John Long](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Charter Commission comments
Date: Wednesday, December 22, 2021 10:17:50 AM

I am absolutely opposed to non-citizens being allowed to vote. The degradation of citizenship with its rights and responsibilities into mere residency is a tool that the left is using to seize power; all citizens must oppose this scheme.

How much are all these new salaried positions in Portland government that the subcommittees of the charter commission are recommending going to cost? I guess "change" to the charter commission means more people on the public payroll and consequentially higher taxes to pay for them. My taxes increased 17% at the last re-evaluation, and I see no reason to pay any more.

Does the recommendation for the school board to have "budget autonomy" mean giving it taxing authority? If so, such a recommendation is insanity.

The school board's budget should compete with the budgets of all the other city departments for taxpayer dollars, and then the city council should have the final decision.....just the way it is now.

John Long
121 Ocean Avenue
Portland, ME

From: [Johannah Hart](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: opinion
Date: Wednesday, December 22, 2021 9:53:47 AM

Dear Charter Commission members,

I do not support voting rights for all citizens of Portland regardless of citizen status.

I appreciate the sentiment, but the change would be too troublesome & subject to abuse.

The city of Portland, at this time, is under great stress. It is impossible to transit the downtown section of town, including parking lots, museums & streets w/ out being solicited by unfriendly homeless.

Until the homeless facility is built & functioning we should hold off on further changes. We need more good-order, not less. Things are not looking good. I hope the commission will put efforts into building a liveable, orderly city. Happy holidays to all!
Sincerely, Johannah Hart

From: [Gus Goodwin](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Re: Noncitizen voting
Date: Wednesday, December 22, 2021 9:30:37 AM

Thanks for all of the replies to this suggestion/ question... Years ago I remember Glenn Cummings talking about it as a way to engage young people. Probably does not fit with your task right now I am realizing.

Be well,
Gus

On Mon, Dec 20, 2021 at 5:24 PM Gus Goodwin <gus.goodwin@gmail.com> wrote:

Hi

Just thinking why not also make it legit for 17 year olds to vote? I think involving young people would be a good thing and would give them a voice.

I would appreciate your thoughts on this.

Regards,

Gus Goodwin

From: [Davian Akers](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Non resident voting
Date: Wednesday, December 22, 2021 6:01:48 AM

Not that my opinion matters because this city will whatever it wants anyway however I oppose this change for allowing non us citizens to vote. While a Portland Resident and US citizen I can't walk into Mexico or Canada or even Auburn Maine and vote there. So why should other people be allowed to vote in Portland?

From: [Jody Huntington](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Public comment
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 8:57:07 PM

I am unable to attend the meeting tomorrow night, & wanted to weigh in w/my comments by email. It looks like there are many interesting developments within the various Charter Commission committees. My major concern is the cost of the suggested changes; it appears that each committee is proposing an expansion of paid employees for new or existing departments. Please take into consideration the possibility of using existing personnel, or creating groups of unpaid, appointed volunteers (similar to the various city groups already in effect). The last thing Portland needs is a larger bureaucracy, and these proposals involve a significant increase in the city budget.

Additionally, I do not support a stronger mayoral position; Portland needs a professional, trained person to act as City Manager, not another elected politician; voters are fickle, & having the Mayor operate at the whim of voters who might not have enough knowledge of municipal matters to have a long term plan is counterproductive & potentially detrimental to our long term viability as a city.

Thank you

--

Jody Huntington
207-671-9972

From: [Brown, Julia](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Universal Resident Voting
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 7:41:12 PM
Attachments: [ILAP Testimony In Support of Universal Resident Voting 12.21.2021.pdf](#)

Short comment attached. Thank you!

Julia Brown, Esq. (she/her)
Advocacy and Outreach Director
Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP)
207.699.4416 (direct line)
jbrown@ilapmaine.org
www.ilapmaine.org
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From: dan_milligan
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Districtt 5 Rep
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 7:27:43 PM

Ryan, I find it hard to believe that you can graduate from a top flight Eastern College but seem to be unable to read and understand a history book, or a recent newspaper. When your charter member announced that "We are coming for you Mr Jennings White racist" I was in Detroit. I showed that article to all of my friends and family and Everyone agreed that in Detroit the Wayne County DA would of put a restraint order on Her and she would have been barred from City Hall as long as Mr Jennings was there. Several people remarked how shocking it was that none of the other members did not make a statement condemning her. They figure that makes all the other members racists themselves. My point Ryan is that the crazy idea of giving noncitizens the right to vote in local elections showed how far out of touch the Commission is. Can a non citizen sit on a jury? No, can they be drafted into Military service? No. Ryan I commend you for the fortitude of your political aspirations, however you need to get out into the World and get some real life experience. Take a good look at S.F Cal or for that matter any large west coast city. You are doing your best to repeat that. Know the only major City to not have "Peaceful Protest" destroy private property in the name of "justice"? Detroit. They learned a hard lesson 53 years ago. James Craig Portland's former Police Chief was the Police Chief in Detroit the last several. He grew up there, a few blocks from me. Think about how foolish you might feel in years to come supporting something as crazy as Non Citizen voting? It's a trend that will pass, just like a Mullet haircut.

From: [Paula Baker](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Voting
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 6:25:15 PM

Paula Moran
12 Kimberly Court
Portland, Maine

I am a property owner in Portland, Maine. I am writing to object to making voting available to noncitizens, and or attempting to allow fraudulent voting by not identifying citizenship.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Els Heij](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: voting rights for non-citizens
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 6:21:48 PM

Good evening,

Somehow I am not able to join this evening's meeting via the zoom link provided.

I would like to weigh in from personal experience:

I have lived and worked in the US for most of the past 35 years as a legal resident ('green card' holder).

I have worked first as a registered nurse, then as a licensed clinical social worker; paid taxes; raised children. My children are now grown, I still work as a social worker and still pay taxes.

Not being able to cast a vote has been extremely painful and difficult all these years. From my professional and my personal role I have ideas about policies, and wish these would be heard. I would also very much like to have a vote in how my taxes get spent.

Lastly, nowhere in the US constitution does it state that non-citizens can not vote.

I am a Dutch citizen. The Netherlands does not recognize dual citizenship with the US, otherwise I would have applied for US citizenship. Yet it is not a good idea to relinquish my Dutch citizenship.

I vote: Yes! Let non-citizens vote!!!

Thank you,

Els Heij
570-228-1485

From: [andrea-jane](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Yes to universal resident voting.
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 5:29:44 PM

As a non-American citizen with a permanent resident status, I have been living and working in the USA for six years now. I strongly support extending municipal voting in Portland Maine to permanent residents, asylum seekers, and new immigrants. We deserve to have a voice in the political process on a local level. Universal resident voting would allow non citizens to actively engage in the political process. When raising concerns with local representatives, I find it difficult to hold them to account for their decisions, as my voice is just a voice, not a vote. As a constituent I am directly affected by the policies they support or decline to support, but I have no agency to effect change at the ballot box.

Thank you
Andrea-Jane Cornell
51 Farnham Street Portland, Maine 04103

--

Sound:
++ [andrea-jane](#)
++ [Le fruit vert](#)

From: [Aaron L. Rosenblum](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Universal Resident Voting
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 5:27:17 PM

To the Commissioners:
Thank you for your service to the city and your consideration of the topic of universal resident voting.

I resoundingly support the idea of universal resident voting as a way for Portland to become more democratic and inclusive, and to give political voice to those regularly excluded from (the voting part of) our democratic process.

My spouse, who is deeply committed to social change and is as interested in local politics and governance as any citizen, is a permanent resident of the United States. Since moving to the US, she has not had the opportunity to elect her representatives at any level of government or vote for or against ballot initiatives that impact her life directly. This experience has been frustrating for her, as it must be for many who wish to take part in civic life but for any number of reasons have not sought or been granted US citizenship.

I have no concerns that extending the franchise in this way will threaten the security or legitimacy of Portland's elections. I hope we can make this change and look forward to more of my neighbors participating with me in our elections.

Thank you for your time,
Aaron Rosenblum
51 Farnham St.

From: kathryn_o'neil
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Support for residential voting right
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 5:26:19 PM

Good evening,

I am a lifelong Portland resident and currently live in the West End. All residents should be allowed to vote in the place they live. I strongly support this charter commission making voting rights available to all those living in Portland. I work for an immigration attorney- I know how unending and tedious and downright brutal the US immigration system is. The racist parameters of the federal immigration policy should not be reflected here in our city.

Best,
Kathryn

From: [Andy Forgit](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Proposed Changes 2021
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 5:18:33 PM

To All,

I respect and value the dedication and service you do for this great city. Thank You!

I have been a resident of Portland since 1979!

I am also a descendant of immigrants.

Please see my input to the following topics, in red after each item.

Governance Committee

- Proposes giving the mayor more power to set the budget (currently the responsibility of the city manager); make policy; and shape economic development proposals.
- *A mayor voted into the council by popularity may NOT have the skill sets, experience nor education to be setting budgets and making executive decisions.*
- Proposes creating a Chief of Staff position for the mayor and city council. *This could be helpful as long as the job description is clear and unbiased.*

Education Committee

- Proposes giving the School Board autonomy over their budget with no City Council oversight. *NOT a great idea, where's the checks and balances?* Currently the School budget requires Council approval before being put out to citywide vote. There is a legal question as to whether this new proposal is permissible under state law.

Departments Committee

- Has approved creation of a Police Oversight Board with a paid 12-member board and paid staff to receive complaints, conduct evaluations of the police department, and recommend policy changes. Thirteen complaints were filed in 2019 and six in 2020, according to an October 2021 Portland Press Herald article. *Really? Percentage wise this is very low. Stop following the national*

movement of defund the police looking for problems where they do not exist. 12 member board? Why not 6?

Procedures Committee

- Proposes salaries for city councilors and school board members. Currently city councilors and school board members receive a stipend, access to health insurance, and a pension benefit.
- Proposes voting rights for non-citizens. There is a legal question as to whether this is permissible under state law. *Do we really want to go down this road of legality as I believe it will be challenged and costs of litigation will be born on the backs of taxpayers. I believe this is a rampant opportunity for voter fraud.*
- *How will you control ballots for use with non-citizens when there is a general election? What is the criteria (residency) for non citizens and how will they register?*

Elections Committee

- Proposes to establish a taxpayer-funded Clean Elections program and a new staffed office of Elections & Voter Engagement to support it. *Good idea.*
- Proposes changes to the Proportional Ranked-choice Voting system. *This definitely needs some fine tuning!*
- Proposes a reduction in the number of Council Districts from 5 to 3 with each district electing 3 representatives. *? need to see the districts*

Thanks

Andy Forgit
43 Rosedale St
Portland
671-7990
aforgit@maine.rr.com

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From: [michele](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Universal Resident Voting
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 3:56:40 PM

Greetings,

I am writing to express my support for Universal Resident Voting.

Issues that are on the ballot at a local level have a significant impact on both the day to day lives and the quality of live of our residents. Schools, taxes, transportation, services, land use, business development - these decisions affect every one of us, regardless of citizenship status.

It is simply unreasonable to prohibit persons who live in this city from having a voice - people who have children in city schools, who use city parks and services, who use city transit and city streets, who own businesses and employ people in this city, who pay property taxes via either home ownership or monthly rent. The decisions that we make at the polls affect all of our futures, all of our hopes, all of our dreams, no matter one's present citizenship status.

Please, allow all residents of our city to vote on matters that affect our city.

Regards,
Michele Hennessey
Portland, Maine

From: [Wil Thieme](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: universal voting
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 3:40:04 PM

I was impressed to hear recently that allowing residents to vote in Portland regardless of their citizenship was on the table. This would be a wonderful improvement to the democratic process of the city of Portland and would demonstrate a deep respect for all Portlanders. Please look into this approach fully and do what you can to allow all residents of Portland to vote.

Wil Thieme

From: [Buddy Moore](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: In Support of Universal Resident Voting
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 3:34:32 PM

Dear Charter Commissioners:

I'm reaching out in full support of the proposed change to the City Charter which would introduce universal resident voting to Portland, Maine.

All residents of our City, regardless of citizenship status, deserve to have an equal say in the local electoral politics which stand to significantly affect them. Preventing them from having a voice and a material vote in the policies and systems which they live under is a prohibition that runs counter to the core principles of liberty and self-determination. Every individual who is a member of our community deserves to be afforded the right to vote.

While I know many of you already support this measure, I respectfully urge you to disregard the reactionary individuals in our City who seek to undermine this incredibly important effort. Please move forward with this charter amendment, and join New York City, San Francisco, Takoma Park, and numerous other municipalities, in allowing ALL residents to have a say in the local government which wields power and influence over their lives.

Thank you.

In solidarity,
Buddy Moore (he/him)

From: [Josef Kijewski](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Non citizen voting
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 2:55:05 PM

My name is Josef Kijewski. I am a property owner at 141 Sherman Street, and I am very much in favor of non-citizen voting. People who are not citizens are still engaged in our community, pay taxes, and deserve to have their say in terms of how that which is local is handled. I believe the case against non-citizen voting is primarily fueled by racism, and that makes it even more important that we stand strongly in favor of the ability for all individuals to participate in their local government. Thank you.

Best,

Josef

Sent from my phone.

From: [Glen Gallik](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Universal Resident Voting
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 2:32:46 PM

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing today to express my deep support of your efforts to enshrine universal resident voting rights into our city charter. Of all the important and needed revisions you are considering to the city charter, I believe this is the most critical step forward that you can take.

I firmly believe that all people who reside in the city should be able to fully participate in all aspects of local governance. All of our lives are impacted by the actions of our local elected leaders, and all of us should have an equal share in deciding who our leadership is.

When I first came to Portland, I moved in in the middle of October. Two weeks later, I was voting for councilors and school board members. That there are people in this city who cannot do the same is unconscionable.

Furthermore, I am steadfastly opposed to any kind of restrictions based on immigration status or length of residency. All residents must be able to participate in all elections.

Sincerely,

Glen Gallik

From: [Todd B.](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: In Support of Resident Voting
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 2:28:42 PM

Good afternoon Commissioners,

I want to express my strong support for universal resident voting in municipal elections and ballot questions in Portland.

Although I was born a citizen, my partner's family immigrated to the Portland, Maine from Vietnam almost eleven years ago now. And while she and her sister have recently become citizens, her parents still retain resident status. They have full-time jobs, they own a house on Westlawn Rd, they pay their taxes, and their youngest daughter came up through Portland public schools.

They, along with all other non-citizen residents of Portland, are just as much a vibrant and integral part of Portland's ongoing success as anybody else; but as things currently stand they cannot participate in municipal elections. They have no material say on local issues that will directly impact them and their family. This is an unjust oversight that you and the voters of Portland now have an opportunity to correct.

So, while I am sure you are receiving negative messages from folks who are close-minded or blinded by xenophobic sentiment begging you to continue the ongoing injustice of stifling the voices of our non-citizen residents, I urge you to stand tall for all Portlanders, citizen or not, and include in your charter recommendations the right for all Portland residents to vote on municipal matters, affirming their equality and contributions, and establishing Portland as a beacon to other cities across Maine and the region as a municipality that welcomes and includes all its residents.

Thank you,
Todd Blanchette
South Portland

From: [Robert Kahn](#)
To: [Charter](#)
Subject: Re: citizen comments
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 12:42:51 PM

Robert and Patricia - I thank you both for at least replying.

To All - There was a promise of transparency by candidates wishing to be elected, and later when the commission was set up - promises not kept. Be it the city council, or board positions, the point of citizen involvement is to serve the public - voluntarily. The little I have found to read, the general tone, and specifically in some cases asking for paid positions, the commission is not advocating for citizen representatives serving the public, but the public (taxpayers) serving the council and board members. At this level of government, public service is not a jobs program, or a career.

I welcome your comments. Thank you.

On Mon, Dec 20, 2021 at 9:12 PM Patricia Washburn

<pwashburn@portlandmaine.gov> wrote:

Thank you for sharing your views! I appreciate every voter who takes the time to be part of the process.

On Mon, Dec 20, 2021 at 11:51 AM Robert Kahn <rhkahnme@gmail.com> wrote:

Charter Commission,

It is difficult to fully, and with detailed explanations, submit my comments because there has not been public engagement and full disclosure of the commission's process so far. The following items are what I am very concerned about:

+ There is clearly no regard for the city budget and financial resources. On whose back is your, "I want", list of expenditures going to be carried on?

+ The proposed salaries for elected officials and the Police Oversight Board is no more than a welfare program for people who claim to want to serve in these positions for the benefit of the public. These positions are best served by full time working people who understand what is occurring in the real world of functioning adult working life and financial obligations.

+ Giving a mayor without a guarantee of their economic or financial experience, or knowledge, power over Portland's economic decisions is an ignorant and dangerous idea. Please just think about the consequences of this.

+City councilor Tao Chong's exposure letter in the PPH of the poor educational performance results of Portland's superintendent and school board, clearly mandates that the city council maintain oversight of the school budget.

Robert Kahn

Notice: Under Maine law, documents - including e-mails - in the possession of public officials or city employees about government business may be classified as public records. There are very few exceptions. As a result, please be advised that what is written in an e-mail could be released to the public and/or the media if requested.

From: [J.W.](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Universal Voting Statement
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 11:59:15 AM

I want to address the Universal Resident Voting.

I believe first and foremost, as stated by Ron Hayduk in the attached document, "Today, mass migration challenges dominant notions of citizenship as mobile citizens may retain or regain their right to vote in elections."

This is indeed a radical reconceptualization of citizenship; that I believe warrants more time, attention, and gravity, more public input and clarification, than the Charter Commission can afford.

One major disqualifying part is the inclusion of legally unauthorized individual voting. People without legal presence should not be able to make legal code, either through selecting legislators or voting on referenda. This to me is a first order principle. Nothing more needs to be argued or said.

I will address what has been said, however, as I find the logic debatable and unconvincing.

Beth Stickney is in favor of allowing those without legal presence in the country to vote, on the basis that it would be too onerous and complicated to go through the dozens of different statuses that exist, decide which are worthy, and keep up to date on what individual's statuses are; and therefore we must grant the right to vote to any individual, regardless of their legal status.

I agree this is onerous, unnecessary, and that there is a simple workaround: keeping the right to vote exclusive to citizens. It is the only criterion that maintains logical coherence when discussing which non-citizens should be entitled to vote, and solving issues of why the make up of voters in local elections should differ from state and federal. After all, the arguments about taxpaying and schoolchildren apply just as equally to federal and state, and I think that most would agree having a president elected by non-citizens would be a violation of sovereignty; but that is where the logic leads you to go.

Stickney does not propose a mechanism by which undocumented individuals would be able to prove presence, either; nor does she propose a method by which undocumented individuals could verify their identity. This is of crucial importance; without it, it seems people could literally show up, declare residency, and become lawmakers.

But more to the point-giving people without legal presence the right to make legal code is nonsensical.

Additionally, proponents say there are democratic principles that are questioned. As Hayduk states, "What do these conditions mean for such basic democratic principles as "one person, one vote," "no taxation without representation," and that a just "government rests on the consent of the governed"?"

No one gets more than one vote. His interpretation is abstract, and does not make any sense.

Mr Hayduk also says that we must consider the "representation gap;" that the number of legislators lags behind the number of people with immigrant background. He implies that legislators in governing bodies must have national origin, ethnicity, and other identity characteristics in proportion to those identities in their communities. This is not a principal of democracy at all; and in fact, if that were the case, the Portland City Council and Charter Commission would violate it, being that they contain "minority" identity members in far greater proportion than there are individuals with those backgrounds in the City of Portland. Thus claims of a representation gap in Portland that needs to be immediately rectified by expansion of voting rights and redefining citizenship, seems not to be a vital case.

As for taxation without representation and consent of the governed:

Consent is given by the fact immigrants came to this country and municipality on their own free will. Why they left their country, whether it was under duress or not, and whether that duress was American caused or not, is irrelevant to the fact they chose Portland: no one in Portland literally forced them to come, and the municipality makes no move to force them to stay against their will. They entered into a social and legal contract with their arrival and maintain such contract by their continued presence.

Additionally, the phrase "taxation without representation" was in response to taxes that specifically targeted and extracted from colonists. There are no taxes specifically levied on immigrants. They are burdened by taxes the same as anyone who isn't an amoral billionaire.

It is also important to note many citizens do not consent to the inclusion of non-legally authorized individuals in their community. Regardless of the morality of this position, it is their right; and the laws and practice of this country and every country in the world reflect that, hence the actuality of legal and non-legal presence. One could say not granting legal presence implies withholding of consent. Thus, a Universal Voting law which includes unauthorized individuals violates citizen's consent, and creates a situation whereby citizens are governed by foreign citizens whose presence violates their consent.

One should apply Occam's Razor: what is the best way to maintain sovereignty while solving the issue of deciding which status of non-citizen immigrants has the right to vote? On the one hand, you have Ms. Stickney's proposal, that everyone with presence, authorized or not, be granted lawmaking capabilities. As shown, however, this violates the consent of citizens. In addition, it creates too many vagaries to sort through, including creating a mechanism for undocumented residents to establish residence, and a mechanism for verifying such claims. More paramount, any measure takes away citizens' liberty to be free from the laws of non-citizens in their own country.

Thus on the other hand, restricting voting rights to citizens maintains sovereignty and citizenship; while eliminating any need to engage in difficult, time consuming, subjective evaluations of which status can vote, or who is who they actually say they are. It is the simplest solution, and the only one that is logically coherent.

I would also say that people who arrive as children in my opinion have a right to claim they did not come by consent; and I would like to see laws reflect that; and that were this proposal to be less permissive, and more tailored, I believe that there would be more compelling arguments to be made to expand voting to these folks and certain others with legal presence. However, as it stands, I feel strongly that it embarks on delineation and deterritorialization with such radical redefinition of body politic, that it must be rejected as doing more harm than good. The issue is not really with voting rights; the issue is really with immigration policy. The solution to the process of citizenship isn't to backdoor everyone into citizenship and in the process disempower citizens; it is to make the process simpler and more just.

James Wright
19 Bramhall St

As an aside - I would like if my name and address were not placed in public record, that is, published on the website; unless such information was published for commentary prior to online comment covid procedure. I would like it to be treated as one speaking in person. Whatever the precedent to pre covid practice, that would be fine. If the notes and minutes reflect that so be it. It also should be noted in public notices people are tweeting that "charter@portlandmaine.gov" is published public record; it is not mentioned in those notices at all.

From: [Karen Snyder](#)
To: [Marpheen Chann](#); [Catherine Buxton](#); [Patricia Washburn](#)
Cc: [Charter](#)
Subject: 12/21/2021 Charter Commission Election Committee- Proposal Observations and Questions
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 8:39:35 AM

Dear Charter Commission Election Commissioners,

Below are my observations and questions to what is being proposed by the Charter Commission Election Committee for the meeting being held on 12/21/2021. [Charter Commission Elections Committee \(civicclerk.com\)](#)

Where is the Proposal for an Easier Fix of RCV Charter Language?

Why isn't there a proposal for an easier fix of the Charter language for RCV? It was revealed during some of the Charter Commission Election committee workshops that the existing RCV (rank choice voting) language is basically incorrectly applied where there is greater than 1 candidate position to fill. This proposal needs to be addressed and provide a simple fix of the existing RCV language. For example:

- Proportional RCV Calculation- Provide clear language to change how the votes are tabulated with a winning threshold in a multi-seat election that would be equal to number of votes cast divided by the sum of one plus the number of seats on the ballot. For example, a district with 3 seats to be filled would use the divisor of 4 (one plus 3) creating a winning threshold of 25%.

Proposal for Clean Election:

Even though I agree with clean elections concepts, it should be clear to the public that it really does not actually make clean elections but attempts to only make elections cleaner. Because this proposed language still:

- 1) Does not end corporate, out-of-state, or foreign money influence in local elections.
- This is due to Supreme Court Citizen United ruling that says PACs can still donate to campaigns.
- 2) Does not limit improper lobbyist influence
- 3) Does not enforce tougher political donation limits.
- 4) Does not ensure consistency and that elections are administered efficiently with effective enforcement mechanisms and transparency of campaign filings and detail data easily available and accessible to public.

There needs to be clarification in this proposal of the following:

- 1) Since clean elections appears to be only is a voluntary program and cannot be forced to be required for all political candidates, it is NOT clear if candidates who choose NOT to use clean election funds if PACS (corporate, out of state, and foreign interests) can still donate to these candidates?
- 2) There is reference to Election Commission to assist City Clerk in administering clean elections but there is no Election Commission currently established.
- 3) Why is this proposal adding another layer of administration called Election Commission to assist City Clerk instead of providing language to hold City Clerk to be more accountable for transparency, responsiveness, clarity in campaign report filing and to report out by election

with detail data easily available/accessible for public to review? In addition, specific language to ensure greater enforcement by City Clerk's office since we all know Portland is NOT great at enforcing existing policies because enforcement language is weak.

4) Is this Election Commission and independent staff or a paid city staff?

5) It is not clear regarding "limit" the amount of contribution funds a political candidate. Does this mean ALL political candidates regardless of if a candidate runs an independent campaign or candidates that use clean election funds are limited to a certain amount of political donations?

6) What is Section 3? This proposal refers to Section 3 which is not included as to what Section 3 verbiage contains.

7) Is Section 12b which is to limit business influence also includes the candidates that don't utilize clean election funds?

8) No clarification specifically as to how and where local funds from the city budget would be allocated from.

- For example, in Seattle commercial and residential) property taxes of \$ 3 million/year which costs the average homeowner \$8/year but there a \$460K implementation up front cost for a portal to enable better data transparency for reporting out by filing by election with appropriate access to the data detail for public

Proposal for Non-Citizen Voting:

It is disappointing that this is even proposed because of the following.

1) There was an attempt by this commission to confuse or mislead the public by renaming/re-branding in order to call it "Universal Voting" which really is "Non-Citizen" voting.

2) There were only 3 speakers on this topic and all three speakers were advocates with weak arguments and data for non-citizens to vote in local elections. This could be construed as bias by this Election Commission.

3) Constitutionally, non-citizens are NOT allowed to vote in Federal or state elections for good reasons so why aren't these reasons good enough for local elections?

4) Charter Commission lawyer, James Katsiaficas, reported that in State of Maine it is not actually legal for non-citizens to vote in local elections if they are not able to vote in state elections.

5) How many comments have been submitted for and against the proposal for non-citizen voting? This is because public comments have not been uploaded since November 14th to city website which is a disservice to the public regarding transparency.

With all that said, this Election committee is still determined to propose Non-citizen voting to the full charter commission without sufficient and valid reasons. I can only surmise the intent is more like a "Hail Mary" to see if enough voters are not paying attention enough and who don't truly understand what they are actually voting for and the intended consequences.

Proposal for A New Election Committee:

I am not sure how this proposal became on the radar when it was only first addressed/proposed in the last Election meeting held. There has never been a discussion of this topic or workshop on it prior to last meeting held on 12/7/2021.

This proposal appears to create an additional layer of redundancy to what the City Clerk is currently doing as per State Law.

Instead of implementing more accountable language for the expectation of City Clerk in elections, this proposal adds another good-intention layer of bureaucracy without ensuring it

will be effective, transparent, and efficient.

For example,

- 1) Why isn't there language being proposed ensuring the City Clerk is running responsive, transparent, and efficient elections and providing summarized reporting campaign finance information per campaign filing and summarized per election with detail data easily available to public?
- 2) In addition, City Clerk should have strong enforcement mechanisms during elections. This would ensure the City Clerk's office is being held accountable to exceptions instead of adding another layer of administration.
- 3) Finally, it is not clear if this proposed election committee is independent and voluntary staff or a paid commission staff?

In conclusion, there needs to be convincing and transparent evidence to propel change. By having a robust and well-thought-out proposal with proper rationalization, analysis, and transparency, it will have a better chance at being accepted by the public. As we have seen with past good-intention policy and Charter language if not well thought out, it can give bad optics to the public and create unintended consequences. Such as what has happened with Ranked Choice Voting and now Rent Control.

Regards,
Karen Snyder
Portland, ME

From: [Austin Sims](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: In Support of Universal Voting
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 8:17:20 AM

Charter Commissioners,

I will be brief. I understand the commission is receiving a large number of emails in opposition to extending voting right in municipal elections to non-citizens. I would like to counter these and insist that broadening the franchise is precisely the right thing to do for all Portlanders.

Our city is made up of both citizens and non-citizens of all colors and creeds and they should have equality before the law as well as equal civic duty. I expect that many who come out in opposition do so from a place of fear. The best way to counter this fear is to allow all to vote in our elections, to this build a city politics representative and in support of all, and to shine a light on that fear, dismissing it forever.

Please stay the course in this recommendation, as it and others up for public consideration make me proud to call this city my home, and you my community.

Regards,
Austin Sims
Chair, Portland Rent Board

From: [Peter McLaughlin](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: In support of universal resident voting
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 8:00:51 AM

Hi all,

I unfortunately have to work this evening, so I'm writing in support of universal resident voting in advance of the hearing tonight.

Whereas our city prides itself on being welcoming to immigrants and refugees from across the globe.

Whereas new Mainers are an indelible piece of the fabric of our city, who make Portland a more exciting, beautiful, diverse, strong, productive, wise, and worldly place to call home.

Whereas forms of non-citizen voting now exist in over 15 municipalities nationwide, with implementation and privacy issues successfully dealt with.

Whereas the 2008-2009 Charter Commission considered addressing non-citizen voting and the City Council has seriously discussed the issue at least twice in the last decade and a half.

Whereas non-citizen voting was among the most regularly discussed issues during the 2020 Charter Commission campaign— with nearly all elected commissioners expressing support for it.

Whereas the opposition to this issue is rarely able to string together a coherent argument without resorting to outright xenophobia and racism.

Whereas Universal Resident Voting is clearly an idea whose time has come.

Be it resolved that the Elections Committee is clearly in the right to put forward a simple, value-based proposal to deliver municipal voting rights to all adult residents of Portland, Maine.

Thanks for reading this heartfelt resolution of one. Many more thanks for all of our tireless work in service of our wonderful city.

Sincerely yours,
Peter McLaughlin

--

Peter McLaughlin | Peaks Island Council
146 Central Ave
(339) 225-2353

From: [MaryAnn Forgit](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Non Citizen Voting
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 7:46:16 AM

I would like to register my opposition to non citizens voting.

I think as a community we provide opportunity for people to become a U. S. Citizen.

Not until a person is a legal citizen do I believe they should participate as a voter.

MaryAnn
Sent from my iPad

From: [Marpheen Chann](#)
To: nora1112@aol.com; **Charter:** [Patricia Washburn](#)
Subject: Re: Thoughts for the Charter Commission
Date: Tuesday, December 21, 2021 7:24:28 AM

Hi Nora,

I appreciate your reaching out with these concerns. It definitely is frustrating when new rules aren't applied or exceptions are made for chronic bad actors.

I'm forwarding your email to the full charter commission to see if they have thoughts, as well as to the Procedures committee.

Stay warm!

Best,

Marpheen Chann

25 Rackleff Street

Portland, ME 04103

Cell: (207) 245-2173

Website: www.marpheenchann.com

Author of memoir [Moon In Full: A Modern Day Coming-of-Age Story](#) (Coming out June 2022 from Islandport Press)

On Dec 21, 2021, at 6:03 AM, nora1112@aol.com wrote:

Hi Marpheen:

I hope this is still a working email for you. First of all, belated congratulations on your achievements both with the Charter Commission and the upcoming book. Well done....

I just wanted to run something by you that has been a source of both frustration and irritation in the City of Portland lately for me. I am hoping the Charter Commission bears this in mind when it moves forward with its recommendations for a better Portland.

Why do we have rules and regulations on the books that the City just elects not to follow? It is so frustrating for those citizens who try to do the right things and follow the rules as they are layed out and not try to beat the system?

I can give you three examples...

1) A minor thing but having your dog on a leash unless under total voice control. I cannot tell you the times our dogs have been challenged or confronted by another dog while walking that is not on a leash and the owner is just standing yelling at it to obey. Mind-boggling.

2). Then there is the street cleaning ordinance that clearly states violators will be towed. Well the cars in front of our house stay where they are, they are sometimes ticketed (which does not move them and we still do not get the service we are paying exorbitant property taxes to get) and now I am told by a City official that if it is a holiday weekend, the City decided to give the violators a break and not even ticket them. Why spend the money to have the signs stating the rules and then not enforce them? I did suggest that they send a tow crew ahead of the street sweeping crew as the city can make more revenue with towed cars than with tickets but that fell on deaf ears.

3). Short term renters and violations. This one really hits home as we have a violator right next door to us. The owner lives in Massachusetts (and advertises that fact on the website, we have also met him). The short term tenants have caused noise, litter and parking issues. The sidewalk in front of the property was not cleared of snow after this storm. I and several neighbors (some of whom are landlords of short term rentals themselves and do the right things) have reported it to the city who tells us that they have looked into it, they have notified the owner but have chosen not to enforce the fines at this time. Well again, if I can get away with a slap on the wrist and not have to pay for it, I will continue the bad behavior.

All of this is just to ask that any changes to rules and regulations or any suggestions for new rules, please be ready to enforce them. The City has a commitment to its citizens and it should stand by it. I know the excuse of the pandemic or the other excuse of not having enough staff to do the job,

but frankly that is not my problem. I did not make the rules, the City did and it is their job to enforce the rules.

Sorry for getting up on my soapbox but I wanted to put a bug in your ear about this as I think the Charter Commission can do good things for the City of Portland and I look forward to seeing what they are.

Happy Holidays to you and your family.

Nora Graves

From: [susan_abt](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Re: Non-citizen voters
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 9:05:45 PM

On Dec 20, 2021, at 9:04 PM, susan abt <susansabt@gmail.com> wrote:

I am against non-citizens having the right to vote in municipal elections.

Susan Abt

From: [John Bennett](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Non resident voters
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 8:56:22 PM

If indeed I understand this proposal, I am staunchly opposed.

The idea of "shielding" non resident illegals from legitimate legal authorities is not acceptable to me natural born citizen dedicated to obeying the law not breaking it.

As a City, the leadership would be violating law by hindering apprehension and interfering with prosecution.

I Would be strongly calling for the arrest and prosecution for all involved.

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Tess](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Non citizen voting
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 7:09:39 PM

Please... be reasonable - voting should be reserved for UNITED STATES Citizens... only.
Thank you
Theresa Nappi

Sent from my iPhone

From: [Deb Keenan](mailto:Deb.Keenan@portlandmaine.gov)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: PART 1, intro...
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 6:15:25 PM

I am glad for another chance for PUBLIC comment. So far the process has not been particularly transparent, like LAST time, 10 years ago.. That concerns me. How do you intend to represent the interest of Portland people without PUBLIC comments regularly throughout the process as the thinking is evolving, BOTH the people and Commission's? That is what DEMOCRACY is about, as rough and tumble as it can be. People need time to think about and process the charter commission's thinking over time and an opportunity to influence it over time as it is evolving. Additional info is added from the PUBLIC that can help the commission thinking.

EVERYONE has their own biases that PROCESS is democracy, Not a cleansed pretty process, granted, but it usually works out in the end as thinking develops and evolves. People may be coming to a subject thinking "such and such" and realize they have NOT thought of "this and that". We all have our own beliefs, ideals, and opinion, usually determined by our own experiences, circles of friends etc. YES we all tend to hang with our own kind, whatever that may be, for our own comfort levels, I of course believe MY beliefs are the best ones, others may, and inevitably, will disagree. That is the rough and tumble of democracy. I know the process can be difficult but I do not like "minute managing" to control an agenda or to limit public participation. I tend to think our BEST thinking does not come from that.

The public have YET to see the evolution of your thinking and have NO idea what to comment about. That is quite an unfair process. Public participation, by definition, needs to be "meaningful". How is that possible with YOU keeping your cards close to your chest, in secret? The city council has first and 2nd reads for a reason, to alert the public they are about to DO something and they HAVE to name what they are going to do, IN ADVANCE. SO people can think about it, research it, be informed and submit INFORMED, meaningful comments. SAME with the planning board, all their meetings are open to the PUBLIC, if not to public comments, so you can listen to their thinking, see what direction they are going, AHEAD of time etc TO BE an informed public. OTHER wise it is blindsiding the public, being "tricky". Making public participation "in name only" / tokenism to meet meager legal requirements, not meet the intent of the law, and public's needs and right to be informed.

I tend to be wordy to make a point. Apologies for that. I hope you will READ, NONE the less especially since, we the people have had limited input so far and BECAUSE relationship and "where we come from" (our beliefs, are the result of our experiences in life) I'll give you a summary of who I am, risking knee jerk reactions, prejudices, stereotyping ("oh she is one of "THOSE", who ever "those" are) that we all engage in these days, it seems, YOU know "sides" that are INTENDED to divide us? And the process may give you some Portland HISTORY too.

I learned Portland politics at my mama's knee and she learned it at HER mama's knee. I heard ALOT OF stories and Portland history over the years, passed on from my mother and my mother's own mother.

Portland politics have always been rough, full of "sides", and prejudices, trying to gain power and influence, and other sides trying to hold them back and limit power being centralized.

Bottom line is both sides of that part of the family came to Portland in 1874, with all their siblings. THEY WERE what PORTLAND was. ALL worked hard, dirty manual labor jobs, while the girls were servants. They were the new immigrants, bringing badly needed labor, BUT their religion was rejected as a "funny religion" and they suffered prejudice because of that. Their churches were burned, their leaders were tarred and feathered. They kept to their own, created their own schools to protect their kids, worked hard, tried to ignore the prejudice and moved forward, slowly and strove to "prove themselves", despite the prejudices. It was a hard and on going struggle. Many other immigrants came at the same time and they helped each other. Bias is a hard thing to fight, but fight, they did.

They spent that hard earned money at other immigrant stores, building up the then immigrant community, making it stronger. Slowly people on BOTH sides assimilated. That previously rejected religion, slowly became the MAJORITY or at least tolerated. Those previously rejected immigrants, as always, became owners and leaders. BUT it was a LONG time. Prejudice is hard to fight. That is the mother's side.

My father side started things a new. He came here in the 1920's with a new wave of "rejected" immigrants. His story is the same as above, rejected religion, with accent, prejudice, stereotypes etc. BUT there were MORE of his religion now, some assimilation of BOTH sides had occurred. It was a little easier BUT the prejudice and stereotypes and misinformation was long lasting and continued. The KKK arrived, Yup IN Portland. They had their own party "the KNOW Nothings" and made political in ROADS at election time, so maybe it wasn't BETTER !! They won the GOVERNORSHIP and legislative seats and council seats. Think Lepage and TRUMP and what we have seen the last 4-10 years!!!. The good news, it didn't last long. A BIG scandal was their downfall.

SOME, in my opinion, have misled you that that era LED to the 1st ELECTED MAYOR to balance elective power, that suddenly equalize POWER, like magic. It didn't. PROOF? It didn't LAST. It did NOT improve "people Power" It instead institutionalized power in the hands of a few/ONE.

About 10 years ago, some, also new to this community, and not knowing the history and probably with the best of intentions, TRIED to revive an elected mayor, that had never worked well. An elected mayor is NEW to this community, NOT traditional. MANY DID NOT want POWER centralized in ONE leader. They were afraid it would be too easy to corrupt ONE leader. TOO easy to abuse power. IT was a VERY close race, it did not receive an overwhelming MANDATE of the voters. OTHERS saw an opportunity to GRASP and centralize power IN ONE person, THEY LOVED the idea, easier to corrupt one person, rather than 9!!.

Sadly it passed. I and other worked to make the mayoral office as WEAK as possible, to limit its powers thru that charter commission, 10 years ago., To limit potential abuse of power. I wanted a 2 year election cycle, instead of 4, for example, to see if an elected Mayor "worked". As we have seen a LOT of damage can be done in 4 years of power. OTHERS wanted 6 years to ensure POWER. I voted against an elected Mayor but accepted the results and worked to elect the type of Mayor, I wanted. There have been growing pains like anything new. Change is hard for people I do NOT want a more powerful MAYOR and MORE centralize power in ONE person. That is NOT how democracy works best. A city manager is accountable to at LEAST 9 people, 9 bosses, plus the people. AND is a trained professional in administration.

AS much as some people think a more powerful mayor will represent the people best. Keep in mind, ONLY if YOUR preferred candidate wins the seat. There is WAY too much money in politics these days. AND "The people" aren't usually the ONE'S with the MONEY. Special interest is. THEY are often able to KILL people's referenda thru their money, interests and expensive sophisticated ads.

People's movement increasing lose because they just cannot compete in the MONIED self interest, game. The days of door to door and community organizing are gone, as much as I hate to admit it. The victories are few and far between, in a covid and UNITED CITIZEN'S world, where voters rights are suppressed. And where people need TRICKS to win.

From: [Gus Goodwin](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Noncitizen voting
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 5:24:51 PM

Hi

Just thinking why not also make it legit for 17 year olds to vote? I think involving young people would be a good thing and would give them a voice.

I would appreciate your thoughts on this.

Regards,

Gus Goodwin

From: [Ron Smalley](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 5:04:49 PM

Enough!

Not only does this violate state law but it intrudes on what is the accepted definition of the word "citizen".

Laws and norms take years to pass and be accepted.

The notion that everyone living here is eligible is wrong. Earn your citizenship, then you can vote. Don't like this? Go back to where you came from.

Don't tramp on what has made my country what it is today. A place you couldn't wait to get to!

Ron & Deb Smalley
26 Meadow Ln, Portland, ME 04103

From: [Josh M](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Non-citizen voting - voicing support and pointing out a path forward that avoids Federal repercussions
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 4:54:31 PM

Hello,

I wanted to voice my support for non-citizen voting. Those without citizenship are still members of our community and contribute to our society. They should have a voice.

I wanted to propose perhaps a different take on this. I would like to see non-citizen voting limited to those with permanent residency (green cards). I think this would alleviate the challenges around Federal government involvement/scrutiny/deportation.

If voting was opened up to permanent residents, City of Portland wouldn't have to worry about the Federal government applying pressure through funding mechanisms to get access to voter rolls as everyone on the rolls would legally be permanent residents. Asylum seekers can transition to a green card in one year - so it's not an insurmountable hurdle like gaining citizenship can be for some. This would open the ability to vote for thousands of people in our community now!

Ideally, it'd be easier to gain US Citizenship and we wouldn't have to peel this ethical onion. I do think that voting should be for permanent members of our community as the effects of elections can last for decades.

I hope that maybe we can start here and see how it goes? Nothing is a "one way door" and we can always warm the waters with this take, and then open it to all residents at a later date once the concept gains in the mainstream. It'd be best not to jeopardize people getting deported and Portland losing millions in Federal funding when you could essentially have the same outcome with this slight tweak.

Thanks as always,

Wish I could make the meetings but have been having to work later hours that do not allow me to attend to make comment in person.

Josh
12 Bancroft

From: patty_skerritt
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: Amendment
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 1:39:45 PM

I do not support allowing the privilege of voting in the City of Portland if you are not a citizen of the United States. This is not something we should consider and by virtue of the fact it is buried on the agenda a few days before the Christmas holiday is an indication you are trying to push it through unnoticed or bury the discussion.

Please do not support this amendment.

Thanks very much.
Sent from my iPhone

From: [Viva](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: All Resident Voting
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 12:52:57 PM

Esteemed Commissioners,

The right of all adult residents of Portland to vote in municipal elections and on municipal initiatives is established regardless of citizenship status. City officials will take all reasonable care to ensure that exercising this right does not allow non-citizen voters to vote in federal or state elections, until such time as those voters are allowed by law.

Such care should include providing translated or interpreted information for non-English speakers. While the city's voter list is a matter of public record, city officials will not make public the citizenship status of any voter or provide information to any enforcement agency beyond what is on the public record.

Thank you,
Viva (Portland Maine resident and business owner)

Executive Director

VIVA & The Reinforcements

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From: [Robert Kahn](#)
To: [Charter](#)
Subject: citizen comments
Date: Monday, December 20, 2021 11:51:34 AM

Charter Commission,

It is difficult to fully, and with detailed explanations, submit my comments because there has not been public engagement and full disclosure of the commission's process so far. The following items are what I am very concerned about:

- + There is clearly no regard for the city budget and financial resources. On whose back is your, "I want", list of expenditures going to be carried on?
- + The proposed salaries for elected officials and the Police Oversight Board is no more than a welfare program for people who claim to want to serve in these positions for the benefit of the public. These positions are best served by full time working people who understand what is occurring in the real world of functioning adult working life and financial obligations.
- + Giving a mayor without a guarantee of their economic or financial experience, or knowledge, power over Portland's economic decisions is an ignorant and dangerous idea. Please just think about the consequences of this.
- + City councilor Tao Chong's exposure letter in the PPH of the poor educational performance results of Portland's superintendent and school board, clearly mandates that the city council maintain oversight of the school budget.

Robert Kahn

From: [Bill Weber](#)
To: [Charter](#)
Subject: Comments on Elections Committee Nov 30 Work Shop
Date: Saturday, December 18, 2021 5:46:06 PM

After an extended period away from home, I am catching up on the work of the Elections Committee by reviewing meeting minutes and recordings. I just reviewed the replay of the November 30 meeting that covered Clean Elections, universal resident voting, Proportional Ranked Choice Voting, and District size and representation. These comments are specifically aimed at the last two issues.

Proportional Ranked Choice Voting

I really appreciated everything that Deb McDonough said about the benefits of proportional ranked choice voting (PRVC). Adoption of a methodology where the threshold for multi seat elections is lowered would correct the flaw in our current system in tabulating votes. I especially liked the value statement on representative government she shared from the League of Women Voters (US).

The League supports electoral systems that elect policy-making bodies - legislatures, councils, commissions, and boards - that proportionally reflect the people they represent.

If the Charter Commission believes in this statement then PRVC must be adopted.

District Size and Representation

I also agree with Deb McDonough's statement that smaller districts would improve representation. Creating more seats at the table would not only improve representation, but a larger council I believe would be able to get work done more efficiently.

Portland is a large (by Maine standards) and complicated city. The City Council has created a number of Committees and subcommittees to take on the challenges of such a complicated system. Most of my interaction with the Council has been through the Sustainability and Transportation Committee which has only three Council members. The challenges faced by our fair city are too great and the risks imposed by climate change too dire for such a small body to address adequately.

For the sake of argument perhaps each district is divided in half? That

would be the simplest method to adopt smaller districts. Or as Phil Steele proposed electing multiple reps per district with PRCV applied.

Thanks for holding these public events and thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

--

Bill Weber
66 Roaring Brook Road
Portland, ME 04103
(207) 232-9802

From: [Bob McKillop](#)
To: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: From Portland Resident Bob McKillop: opinions on. Charter Commission committee suggested changes
Date: Saturday, December 18, 2021 10:18:26 AM

Hello Portland Charter Commission:

Regarding the upcoming Zoom meeting on Tuesday, December 21, relating to updates from the various committees of the Charter Commission, I'd like to state my opinion on several of the proposals.

1. **Governance Committee** has agreed to giving the mayor more power over the budget, policy setting and a role as "deal maker" for economic development proposals. Plus, creation of a new position of Chief of Staff for the mayor and city council.
 1. I feel strongly that, in today's very polarized political climate, which is evident in Portland to some extent, an elected mayor with authority to make policy, budget decisions, and economic development deals, is NOT the best option for Portland. This type of mayoral position would increase the likelihood for special-interest or factional political groups to have an over-stated influence on city government. I support the old governance arrangement, prior to the implementation of the elected mayor position, where the mayor is part of the city council, with little additional influence, and where the city council represents the interests of the community at large, and individual city districts. I think the council / city manager governance arrangement is the best situation to allow for all views to be shared, and for a rational, thoughtful resolution of differences of opinion.
 2. The new position of mayor's chief of staff would directly overlap with, and be in conflict with, the city manager's position, and I am against that proposal.
2. **Education Committee** has proposed budget autonomy for the school board with no city council oversight of their budget (legal ??) and creation of "participatory budgeting".
 1. While I support the public schools, and I support generous

budgeting for the schools, I am against budget autonomy for the school board. An autonomous school budget, without school board responsibility for raising the money to support the budget, would result in irresponsible spending and no accountability for costs.

2. I believe that Portland taxpayers deserve the ability to evaluate city spending in one budget, so that they can determine whether the overall spending plan supports their individual priorities for the city.
3. **Elections Committee** is working on establishing a new staffed office of Elections & Voter Engagement to support a taxpayer funded Clean Elections program.
 1. I am in favor of a taxpayer funded clean elections program, but I don't think it needs a dedicated staffed office of Elections. I think that the city clerk's office has historically done a terrific job in managing Portland's elections, and I don't see the need for moving that function to a dedicated office.

Thank you very much for serving on the Charter Commission, and for your service to the community,
Bob McKillop

From: [Cheryl Ann Leeman](#)
To: [Catherine Buxton](#)
Cc: charter@portlandmaine.gov
Subject: RE: Procedures Committee
Date: Saturday, December 18, 2021 7:36:20 AM

Good morning, Catherine. Thank you!

It would be helpful for public comment and transparency if the legal memo provided by Jim Katsiaficas could be uploaded as well. In addition, it should be provided to the full Charter Commission when your Committee reports out its research and recommendations.

Best, Cheryl

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Catherine Buxton](#)
Sent: Friday, December 17, 2021 6:02 PM
To: [Cheryl Ann Leeman](#); [Charter](#)
Subject: Re: Procedures Committee

Hi Cheryl!

I think you may be referring to Pat's proposal for the **Elections** committee, which is a another committee she sits on. Thanks for asking! Here is a copy of her proposed language which should also be uploaded by the clerk for the Tuesday, Dec 21 Elections meetin. This document also includes some promotional language for the public hearing on the 21st.

Best,

On Fri, Dec 17, 2021 at 1:08 PM 'Cheryl Ann Leeman' via Charter <Charter@portlandmaine.gov> wrote:

Hello, Commissioner Washburn. Now that the your proposal has been tweeted on Twitter and retweeted, can I please get a copy of the proposed language? Thank you, Cheryl

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

From: [Patricia Washburn](#)
Sent: Tuesday, December 14, 2021 7:21 PM
To: [Cheryl Ann Leeman](#)
Subject: Re: Procedures Committee

My apologies. Tonight's meeting was canceled because two of the four committee members could not attend. We will attempt to present better documentation before our next meeting on the 28th.

Pat Washburn

On Mon, Dec 13, 2021 at 6:20 AM Cheryl Ann Leeman <cal4161@yahoo.com> wrote:

Good morning, Commissioner. Could you be so kind as to send me the documents with proposed recommendations to be discussed at your upcoming meeting as they are not in the agenda materials online? Thanks you, Cheryl

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows

Notice: Under Maine law, documents - including e-mails - in the possession of public officials or city employees about government business may be classified as public records. There are very few exceptions. As a result, please be advised that what is written in an e-mail could be released to the public and/or the media if requested.

--

Catherine Buxton (she/her/hers)

Charter Commissioner, At-Large

email: cbuxton@portlandmaine.gov

mobile: 978-382-2629

Please note: Like all my fellow commissioners, I am humbled to serve in public office and volunteer my time. Due to constraints of my day-job, I am not able to check my email or phone during business hours. I value your input and feedback and will do my best to respond within 3-5 business days. Thank you for your grace and understanding.

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