

**City of Bridgeport  
Charter Review Commission  
Regular Meeting  
April 5, 2012**

**ATTENDANCE:** Cathleen Simpson, Chair; George Estrada, Vice Chair; Charles Valentino; Rev. William Marshall, Harry Weichsel, Ruben Felipe (5:45 p.m.), Florisca Carter (5:46 p.m.)

**OTHERS:** Atty. Stephen Mednick, Atty. Ed Maley

CALL TO ORDER.

Commissioner Simpson called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

Approval of Minutes for  
March 20, 2012, March 22, 2012 and March 27, 2012.

**\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO MOVED THE MINUTES OF MARCH 20, 2012;  
MARCH 22, 2012 AND MARCH 27, 2012.**

**\*\* COMMISSIONER ESTRADA SECONDED.**

**\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Attorney Mednick distributed a lengthy document containing copies of the various testimonies from the hearings, copies of the documents that were handed out by Library Chairman O'Donnell. Atty. Mednick said that he would like to remind everyone that both he and Atty. Maley respectfully disagreed with Chairman O'Donnell's interpretation of the Statute as being black letter law in this context.

Commissioner Felipe joined the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Atty. Maley then gave a brief overview of the key points of his interpretation of the statute language.

Commissioner Carter joined the meeting at 5:46 p.m.

Rev. Marshall asked if there was a need to change anything in the Charter regarding the Library. Commissioner Simpson said that the reason that the Commission requested the Library Board to do a presentation because the Commission was trying to understand how the Library fit into the overall scheme of things. Discussion followed.

Commissioner Estrada suggested that the Commission consider how Board members are vetted through the Ethics Commission and then approved by the Council. He also suggested that the Commissioners consider having the Library have an annual audit.

Ms. Carter said that she was very offended when she heard the Board state that they were above the political fray. She also said that the Judge had made a statement that he didn't understand why the Board felt that everything in the City needed to be fixed, such as with an appointed Board of Education. The Judge went on to say that the school system worked perfectly fine for his daughter, who graduated from John Winthrop School and is now a student at Amherst College. Ms. Carter informed her fellow Commissioners that he neglected to state that she graduated high school at Laurelton Hall.

Discussion followed about whether the Library should be part of the Charter revision considerations. Ms. Carter said that she had always felt that the libraries could do more for the children. Atty. Mednick said that the Commission should consider the Library as part of their charge.

Commissioner Estrada spoke about the history of the library and the constant reduction of the budget. Ms. Carter then said that she felt that increased funding was not necessary and that there needed to be more creative with regards to programming.

Atty. Mednick then reviewed the material that he would like to cover in the coming week (Ch. 1-6) and the Saturday session (Ch. 7) on the 14th at UB. On the 17th, there will be another public comment session. The discussion then followed about the remaining dates and adding May 8th, 10th and 15th. The discussion then moved to whether or not Mr. Strastrom could be scheduled. It was pointed out that the Preamble still needs to be crafted.

Atty. Mednick then informed the Commissioners that there was a miscellaneous section in the packet of information he had handed out earlier. He then gave a very brief overview of the material included in this section. He said that everything had been submitted into the record had now been given to the Commissioners.

Outreach Committee.

Commissioner Valentino said that there had been a meeting at a local library. He said that once again, no one wanted to be on the record. When Commissioner Valentino arrived, the staff did not know where the meeting was to be. Several of the members of the volunteer groups came up to ask about the Charter Revision members' background. Following that, many of the volunteers spoke about their views on the Public schools. Commissioner Valentino said that he was very

surprised that none of the senior citizens had come forward to talk the Outreach Committee. Commissioner Valentino said that being on this board had been a real eye opener and he had learned a great deal about how the City functions.

Ms. Carter said that Kevin Johnson was coming to Bridgeport for a round table discussion and gave the date of the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT.

\*\* COMMISSIONER VALENTINO MOVED TO ADJOURN.

\*\* COMMISSIONER ESTRADA SECONDED.

\*\* THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon L. Soltes  
Telesco Secretarial Services