

**TOWN COUNCIL
WORKSHOP
AUGUST 19, 1996**

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. Present were Mayor Venis, Vice Mayor Cox and Councilmembers Bush, Kiar and Santini. Also present were Town Administrator Flatley, Town Attorney Webber and Town Clerk Reinfeld recording the meeting

1. Charter Questions for Referendum

Mr. Webber provided a history of the Charter from 1961 and explained that the purpose was to grant specific powers. He described home rule powers and said an efficient new document was needed which provided no conflicts. Mr. Webber explained the areas of that Charter that had been proposed and indicated that anything existing in the current Charter would remain on the books as ordinances. He illuminated that ordinances would be decided on an individual basis.

Vice-Mayor Cox asked about the procedure if Council was not comfortable with an issue that was in the Charter.

Councilmember Santini stated that the dates of elections were vague. Mr. Webber advised that he thought the dates needed to be specific and would research this issue.

Vice-Mayor Cox inquired about Council resigning and asked if any appointment would be made until the next election. She suggested that voters would have an opportunity to vote as soon as possible. Councilmember Kiar expressed that the Town could not wait until a subsequent election because of the number of councilmembers required. Mayor Venis recalled a previous decision that an appointment would be made until the next election, regardless of whose election it was.

Mayor Venis opened the meeting for public input.

Al Tyler stated that there should be a review board and said that Council had no right to grant themselves a raise. He said that boundary changes never came to Council.

Pastor Smith, Davie Church of God, stated that he read about the meeting in the newspaper and recommended that Council be advised of the EMS letter.

Vice-Mayor Cox recommended that the Charter be kept brief and cleaned up.

Paster Smith inquired about raising boundaries. Mr. Webber explained that zoning matters were governed by State law and no changes in Town boundaries would occur. He described redistricting.

Councilmember Santini advised that all redistricting matters were presented to Council. She stated that the Police Chief's right to hire and fire did not need to be in the Charter.

Mayor Venis recalled a discussion at the last Council meeting regarding redistricting and inquired if a decision had been reached. Councilmember Santini recommended that redistricting be conducted by a professional and suggested that a non-political study be performed.

Vicky Augustus-Fidelia, 6271 SW 82 Way, expressed the importance of maintaining citizens' rights and stated that this workshop had been held after some adjustments had been made to the Charter. She said that notification was a problem in the Town and recommended that Council and the residents examine what issues were in the best interest of the Town.

Ellis Traum explained his attraction to Davie had been the citizens' desire for limited change. He said comments to streamline and speed things up was a concern.

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Councilmember Santini recommended a review of the proposed changes. Mayor Venis inquired if the residents wanted a citizen board formed. He suggested the matter could be put on the ballot at a later date. Councilmember Santini stated that the ultimate decision rested with the voters in the November election.

Mayor Venis expressed a desire to educate residents on ordinances and changes. He said he understood citizens felt they were being rushed but they did not fully comprehend the process.

Judy Paul stated that Council had an obligation to defeat the ordinance which would place the issue on the November ballot. She expressed the need for more time to conduct meetings and make an intelligent decision. Ms. Paul said she had read the old Charter and compared it to the new Charter. She suggested another workshop be held to provide in depth discussion of the changes.

Councilmember Santini inquired of Ms. Paul whether she noted anything in the Charter addressing lifestyle. Ms. Paul responded that the Town was a frontier community. Councilmember Santini stressed the lifestyle issue would not be effected. Ms. Paul restated that the need for citizen involvement and the requirement for more time.

Dean Alexander inquired what was being decided at the Wednesday meeting. Vice-Mayor Cox responded that it would be decided whether or not to place the Charter changes on the November ballot.

Mr. Alexander questioned the rush and asked why there was opposition to an independent review board. He expressed the need to condense the Charter dealing with important issues and asked who decided which issues were important.

Councilmember Santini mentioned pay raises and said the constitution established in 1789 gave congressional approval for pay raises.

Councilmember Bush inquired about the purpose of a review board. He asked if Council could sit as a member of the board and if, council the document creating the board be redefined.

Councilmember Bush suggested that Council approve the issue at its next meeting and then create a review committee. Mr. Alexander said that this suggestion was possible.

Vice-Mayor Cox said discussions had been ongoing and said she understood why residents were upset after reading the article in the newspaper. She stated that nothing would be changed from the Charter until the ordinance was changed.

Mr. Alexander suggested that notices be distributed or published in the newspaper. Mayor Venis recommended an ordinance review board evaluate changes or additions in the Charter. Mr. Alexander said citizens should be included on such a board.

Councilmember Santini recommended that the matter of Council raises remain in the Charter.

Edna Moore stated that there appeared to be two issues. Pay raises and resignation to run for mayor, which was a State law. Ms. Moore expressed concern that a firm from Tallahassee had written the new Charter. She said a citizen review board should be allowed to participate in decisions outside of State law.

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The changes needed, Ms. Moore stated, were an increase to seven councilmembers and a reduction in the number in districts. She also suggested that the changes to the Charter should wait until the public could be more educated.

Priscilla Rochelle-Smith said she was against pay raises. She stated that councilmembers had sought their positions with full knowledge of salaries involved and had been elected.

Diana Gonzales stated that residents were concerned about Council's action and there were several issues the public needed to know about. Among those matters, she said, were what would be removed from the Charter, why the current Charter was not workable, what were the loopholes, what do the residents gain and what were their choices. Ms. Gonzales said they had been informed too late about the changes. She reiterated that the people needed to be involved.

Michael Davenport made comparisons to the Police Department and stated the need to inform the citizens. He said Council was rushing into a decision and his main concern was not financial but making an informed decision.

Councilmember Santini inquired if anyone had a suggestion to better inform the public of meetings and issues. Mr. Davenport suggested pamphlets be distributed. Councilmember Santini mentioned signs. Mr. Davenport suggested that the "Davie Update" be utilized.

Richard Combs said that the public was getting a mixed message and there was no change except law which would create changes in the way amendments were made. He said an independent review board was custom.

Mr. Combs mentioned water bill information. He agreed it was too soon to put the matter on the ballot.

Fay McDade stated that she was upset at not being notified and said that if changes were proposed, there was an obligation to notify the citizens.

Charles Meadow said the people were concerned and he did not feel Council was considering that fact. He recommended allowing more time for review.

Councilmember Santini inquired if copies of the Charter and the proposed changes were available to the public. Mr. Flatley said they would be made available.

Ms. McDade inquired about how others would be informed. Councilmember Santini discussed the details. She mentioned a review board and indicated that the matter did not have to be on the November ballot.

Grant Marant inquired why the issue was so late in coming up. Mr. Webber explained that several meetings had been held and said that Council had been working on the matter for quite some time. Mr. Grant stated that rushing the public through the process was wrong.

Councilmember Kiar recalled there had been a number of meetings on the issue and said that Council was not trying to push anything through. He said Council wanted to streamline the Charter, but needed suggestions. Councilmember Kiar encouraged residents to speak up on any matters which concerned them in the Charter.

Councilmember Kiar said that he did not have a problem waiting a few more months. He recommended a charter review board be initiated and expressed the need for mutual trust.

Mr. Tyler said he could not understand an objection to residents participating in the review board and indicated that he did not recall Council mentioning the Charter issue.

Mr. Alexander stated that the Miami Herald's article expressed the concerns of the public and suggested the matter be postponed.

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Councilmember Santini inquired about making a decision regarding a time table. Mr. Webber stated that the issue could not be addressed at a workshop as Council could not take action.

Debbie Apolinario said she was impressed to see so many new faces. She suggested a sign with a telephone number be posted to better inform the public. Vice-Mayor Cox said Council had been discussing that possibility for some time and stated that it was Council's intention to clearly inform residents. She expressed concern that the public seemed to have little confidence in Council.

Ms. Augustus-Fidelia said that the public had confidence in Council. She stated that the issue was for residents to become educated voters.

There being no objections or further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

APPROVED _____

Mayor/Councilmember

Town Clerk