

CITY OF SOUTH FULTON, GEORGIA

Charter Commission

July 19, 2022, 6:00 PM

City Hall, 5440 Fulton Industrial Blvd., South Fulton, GA 30336



William "Bill" Edwards, Chair
Judge Kenya Johnson, Vice Chair
Benny Crane
Dedrain "Dee" Franklin
Doree Henry
John Herring
Daphne Jordan
Mayor khalid kamau
Cecily Cole Martin
Suzanne Ockleberry
Marshall J. Taggart, Jr.

MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Invocation
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Roll Call
5. Approval of Meeting Agenda
6. Approval of 7/11/2022 Meeting Minutes
7. Public Hearing
8. Open Discussion
9. Adjournment

Next Meeting: Tuesday, August 2, 2022

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Attendees:

- Benny Crane**
- William “Bill” Edwards, Chair**
- Dedrain “Dee” Franklin (Arrived at 6:11 PM)**
- Doree Henry (Arrived at 6:05 PM)**
- John Herring**
- Judge Kenya Johnson, Vice Chair**
- Daphne Jordan**
- Mayor khalid kamau (Arrived at 6:07 PM)**
- Cecily Cole Martin**
- Suzanne Ockleberry**
- Marshall J. Taggart, Jr.**

Staff:

- Corey Adams, Sr., City Clerk**
- Reginald McClendon, Assistant City Attorney**
- Katherine Vernet, Assistant City Attorney**
- Renardo Paschal, Deputy City Clerk**

Meeting Summary Minutes

Chair Edwards called the meeting to order at 6:01 PM.

The invocation was provided by Pastor Warren L. Henry, Sr., City Chaplain.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited unison.

The roll call was conducted. Dedrain Franklin, Doree Henry and Mayor khalid Kamau were absent. (The members arrived later in the meeting)

Mr. Crane made a motion to approve the July 11, 2022 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taggart. The motion was approved 8-0.

Vice Chair Johnson made a motion to approve the meeting agenda as printed. Mr. Crane seconded the motion. The motion was approved 8-0.

Chair Edwards opened the public hearing. Speakers were allotted two minutes each. Seven speakers provided public comment.

1) Naeema Gilyard: Believes that the Charter Commission will be charged with redistricting due to the recent Census. She requests that the State, County and City make all information available to the public. Any changes to the council districts should be made public as well.

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- 2) Tonya Isles Anderson: Congratulated Commission members on their selection. Seeks solutions to move the City forward. Requests guardrails in the Charter to limit the public infighting. The City is in the media too much.
 - 3) Reshard Snellings: The current Charter does not provide adequate checks and balance regarding the Council. The Council should not be allowed to restrict free speech. Additionally, Council should not have the authority to override vetoes of the mayor. There is not any independence on the Council. When an employee is terminated subject to the confirmation of the Council, the subject employee should be suspended pending the outcome. The Charter is ambiguous in this area.
 - 4) Connie Robinson: Requests that the Charter Commission proceed with the Charter Review in an objective matter and not inject their personal feelings or relationships in the review. Do what is best for the City. Some charter changes have been self-serving in her opinion.
 - 5) Bro. Raymond R. Alexander III: Concerned expressed about garbage removal. With the taxes he pays, he should not have to worry about whether his trash will be picked up.
 - 6) Pastor Warren L. Henry, Sr.: Expressed that he was present at the beginning of the cityhood movement and recalls the formation of the Charter. Advised that the Charter is a living document that was a beginning point and should change as the city changes.
 - 7) Corey Critell: Expressed concern regarding the City's support of its residents and small businesses. Advised that his house has been broken into multiple times and he does not feel any support has been provided to his business. Currently, he is addressing a code enforcement issue for his business that is not warranted.

Open Discussion

Mr. Crane made a parliamentary inquiry regarding the Commission operating in violation of the current Charter by having a member who is "an elected official in the city." Mr. Crane recited the language in Section 4.11, line D of the City Charter.

Mrs. Jordan concurred with Mr. Crane's inquiry and moved that Mayor khalid make an appointment to the Commission in accordance with the Charter. The motion was seconded by Ms. Franklin. The motion was approved 10-0-1. Mayor khalid abstained. Mayor khalid advised he would appoint someone by the next meeting. (Note: Prior to the end of the meeting, Mayor khalid appointed Emilia Walker via an e-mail to the City Clerk. Further, he stated that he interpreted Section 4.11 differently). Chair Edwards confirmed that Mayor khalid would not be able to vote per the resulting vote.

Ms. Ockleberry recommended that the Commission review a few sections of the Charter at each of the remaining eight scheduled meetings. The suggestion was made to review 3-4 per meeting.

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Vice Chair Johnson recommended that all members review each section of the Charter. However, a point person should review the sections and perform a comparison with other charters of cities with similar size and demographics and the model charter developed by the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA). The point person should bring their observations back to the body for discussion.

Ms. Ockleberry recommended we define the criteria and determine what comparable cities we will use.

Mr. Taggart recommended we identify cities that have the unique qualities (such as being a bedroom community) that South Fulton have including matching demographics, population, and other characteristics. The model charter is a good starting point for benchmarking; however, it may not be a model for our city.

Mr. Crane moved that all members review the identified sections and be prepared to discuss the sections including any recommendations. The motion was seconded by Ms. Ockleberry. The motion was approved unanimously.

Ms. Ockleberry made a motion that the members review the first three sections up to section 3.30 for discussion at the next meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Crane. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Commission discussed software platforms, Google docs and SharePoint to edit documents and share information. The Assistant City Attorney advised for information only that the use of these software platforms would be permissible with the understanding that all documents would be subject to open records laws. Ms. Ockleberry moved that the Commission use SharePoint as the editing software. The motion was seconded by Mr. Taggart. Mr. Paschal answered various functionality questions regarding SharePoint. Mr. Taggart moved to call the previous question. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Jordan. The motion was approved unanimously. The main motion by Ms. Ockleberry was approved unanimously.

Mr. Crane recommended that the Commission consider what comments the public has provided in the Commission's review of the Charter. Additionally, he cautioned the Commission against using other sections from other charters because the sections may not be ideal for our city.

Chair Edwards requested that staff include a method on the webpage for the community to provide comments. Additionally, he would like the sections to be covered at the next meeting to be listed on the webpage.

Mr. Taggart inquired about mailing information to senior adults and others about the Charter Commission's work. The City Clerk indicated he would take this request back to the City Manager for her consideration. It was stated that this activity would be an unknown cost. Mr. Herring

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recommend that the City include information about the Charter Commission in their newsletter. The City Clerk indicated he would take this request back to the City Manager for her consideration.

Mrs. Jordan asked that we include the Councilmembers as a means of communication and distribution to inform the community. Additionally, she recommended that we respond to citizens and their concerns.

Mr. Crane advised that the Commission should speak as one voice in responding to citizens and address those concerns that are within their authority. The City Clerk indicated that any concerns outside of the purview of the Commission will be forwarded to City Administration for follow up.

The City Clerk brought to the attention of the Commission that on August 2, 2022 the City will be hosting National Night Out at 6:00 PM. Additionally, the City Council will be meeting on August 16, 2022 at 4:00 PM.

Vice Chair Johnson moved that the Commission revise the starting time for its August 16 meeting to 6:30 PM. Mr. Taggart seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

The Commission agreed to allow the City Clerk to poll the members and determine the next meeting date and time.

Ms. Ockleberry moved that the meeting be adjourned. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Jordan. The motion was approved by unanimous consent. The meeting concluded at 7:07 PM.

Note: Video of the meeting is available on Youtube and verbatim minutes are being developed.