Roll Call
Present: Vince DeLeonardis, Chairman
   Deputy Commissioner Michael Sharp, Vice Chairman
   Deputy Commissioner John Daley, Secretary
   Commissioner John Franck
   Commissioner Michele Madigan
   Commissioner Peter Martin
   Commissioner Skip Scirocco
   Deputy Commissioner Maire Masterson
   Deputy Commissioner Joseph O’Neill
   Deputy Mayor Lisa Shields

Absent: None

Recording of Proceeding
The proceedings of this meeting were recorded for the benefit of the public and the secretary. Because the minutes are not a verbatim record of the proceeding, the minutes are not a word-for-word transcript.

Call to Order
Chairman DeLeonardis called the meeting to order at 6:04 PM.

Chairman DeLeonardis welcomed everyone to the second public Forum. He advised that the next meeting will be tomorrow August 22nd at 1:00 PM in the Glasby Room at the Saratoga Springs Public Library. He noted that the proposed Charter document has been available for review on the web for the past two weeks and opened the Forum with a presentation (attached).

Public Comment
Sam Brewer, Saratoga Springs. Thanked the Commission for their work and for making the recommendations that they have. He has a couple of things: 1) Creation of Public Safety review commission of some kind to provide for effective oversite and divorces politics from City the functions; 2) Expansion to 7 members may provide the ability to consolidate Accounts and Finance functions. He would not be opposed to the expansion. Adding more voices in this City would be better; and 3) Move Council members from part time to full time and pay them more money to attract more people.

Matthew Jones, Saratoga Springs. Thanked the Commission for all the hard work they have done and exceptional accomplishment in the short time of only five months. He commended the Mayor for her creative way to amend the current Charter by appointing the Council members and Deputies to the Commission chaired by the City Attorney. All have a wealth of knowledge on how it exists. He was appointed by Chairman Turner of the last commission to serve on a committee who was charged with making recommendations on updating the current Charter and if you go back to the first slide, there are a number of those points but there was no vote taken at
the last charter attempt so he is speaking for himself, but a number of the items like the notion of council approval for Land Use Boards and the functions of City Hall and efficiencies of moving Rec to DPW makes all the sense in the world. They did not have the foresight to come up with a creative idea of adding the two members At-Large. It is a novel and creative idea and may provide the opportunity for those who don’t have the ability to serve because time just simply doesn’t allow for it. It is a creative solution and he commends you for it. In overall, having read the Charter I think you have come up with an exceptional product in a very short period of time and thank you for your efforts.

Bonnie Sellers, Saratoga Springs. She has lived in Saratoga Springs since 2006 and has attended City Council and the Charter Commission meetings in the past. She got involved with politics and likes this form of government very much. This Commission deserves accolades, a breath of fresh air from some of the previous Charter Review Commissions. She does not say that lightly. She has watched professionalism, professionals, knowledge, Deputies who know their departments who work with other departments so there is a lot of interactions, the Commissioners are the elected officials responsible for coming through for the public and they delivered. And Vince DeLeonardis deserves much, much credit for is his congenialness, professionalism, he also did make sure every Deputy had a chance to talk and everyone else had a chance to talk and asked for a consensus. Every single meeting, he would go over and over, now this is what we did last time, is everyone ok with that, if you come up with anything let me know. It is a rarity to have the quality that Vince gave to this Commission and to our elected officials and their Deputies. I know the Deputies are not elected officials but you are right on board so don’t ever forget it. I can’t thank you enough. I have been to all the meetings in 2017, every single one of them, there is no comparison between the quality of this and the quality of that. Thank you very much.

Frank Schultz, I support the expansion to 7 members. The common practice in California is to bring outside members who hold other political office to commissions, committees and boards for their expertise. He encourages us to do the same.

Chairman DeLeonardis asked if there were any other comments and there were none. He then opened the meeting for the Commissioner to respond to the public comments.

Commissioner Martin wanted to respond to one item from Mr. Brewer. The Public Safety civilian review panel. That was actually raised at the Council level in the past but there are advantages and disadvantages to having that kind of a panel. It creates adversarial relationships between the Police Department and City government. In some cities it performs a very important function because some cities lack training and discipline but that is not the case with our Police Department here. In Saratoga Springs we do have a civilian Commissioner of Public Safety who really does stand separate from the Police Department and Fire Department and provides a level of oversight. He would not be in favor of adding a review panel to our environment.

Commissioner Scirocco thanked the public for their comments and said that this was the first time he saw the data from the poll and there is some very good information and he looks forward to more discussion with the Commission. We have put our heart and soul into this Charter trying to really make it work. He believes in the Commission form of government and it is working very well in the City. He is looking forward to more discussions. Thank you everybody for getting up and making those comments.
Chairman DeLeonardis apologized for not getting the results of the poll out sooner but with the interruption of the fire he was unable to do so.

Commissioner Franck was happy with the survey results. He thought of the addition of the 2 members and people who have been here a long time may not be happy about it but looking at the survey results what you do see are women who are about 60% of the voters and the younger people are looking for the 2 added positions and people who have been here less that 10 years approve it. People who have been here a longer time and Republicans may not be in favor of it. But the best analogy I can give is the race track. It is a historic property and has been updated over time but kept the historic charm. The season was 4 weeks, moved to 5 weeks and now it is 6 weeks. It was done gradually. And this year the addition of the new space at the track is a great addition and packed when originally people were against it and said they wouldn’t go. That’s why I proposed the 2 At-Large members and the Attorney has agreed that it is legal. The number 1 argument that he has heard from people all the time is that it is too hard for W2 workers to run a department. Our City has grown and it give people a chance to run. Though you may not have an office to run, you will be able to get out and have more public interaction. The addition of the 2 members is a great direction. If the addition is not included he will still vote for the document for all the changes that are included. He would like the Charter to be around for a few years but he believes we need to make a change or its doomed. Expanding will be a great addition.

Commissioner Madigan spoke about the At-Large members being referred to as Junior members. She is 99% supportive of the addition. If they are included they are not Junior members. If you are new to the Council, you may be referred to as Junior but these members will have all the same rights as the Commissioners. They may not be running a department but will be 1/14th of the vote and will have been elected by the population. This is a legislative position. Commissioner Franck said that there was a comment made by Jane Weihe that this may be an incubator for members. An At-Large member may run in future for Commissioner of a Department. He would like sustainability to be mentioned in the Preamble. Chairman DeLeonardis commented that sustainability is currently in the Comp Plan, Ordinances, Laws but perhaps not necessarily in the Charter. If there is an appetite for language to be included, we will work it out. He wanted to point out that there are areas where there has been no change proposed. Terms will remain 2 year terms; the positions will remain part time, and no term limits are imposed. We are near the finish line and we will have a vote in the next week or two. There will be another presentation that outlines the specific changes that have been proposed. The public is encouraged to reach out by attending meetings, on line and email. He did receive several other comments from people who couldn’t attend this evening and they will be available for review and become part of the record along with the poll results.

Commissioner Madigan asked if the Deputies had any comments? None were given. Commissioner Franck addressed the gentleman from California regarding the At-Large for expertise. This form of government does have the expertise within the positions the Commissioners hold. The proposed At-Large is just the opposite bringing in people who don’t have the expertise. In California you have a Mayor and Council members who have no expertise so this is the same just the other way around. Commissioner Scirocco commented on sustainability. We have complete Streets, Sustainable Saratoga Plan, Tree Plan and these were left out of the Charter intentionally so that we can make changes via the City Council and a resolution and this addresses the sustainability through those plans.
Chairman DeLeonardis advised that the next meeting will be held tomorrow, August 22\textsuperscript{nd} at the Library.

End of public comment.

Chairman DeLeonardis adjourned the meeting at 6:47 PM. Respectfully submitted by Trish Bush.
Proposed Charter Revisions

- Building on recent successes
- Increasing flexibility of City operations
- Realigning certain functions
- Creating independence of appropriate offices
- Removing unilateral appointments for commissions, boards, and individuals serving City-wide functions
- Improving consistency and readability of the Charter
- Increasing opportunities for individuals to participate in City government
State of the City

**Question:**
Generally speaking, would you say things in Saratoga Springs are going in the right direction, or have they seriously gotten off on the wrong track?
State of the City

- Right Direction: 75%
- Wrong Track: 20%
- Other: 5%
Respondent Breakdown

- Men: 50%
- Women: 50%
- GOP: 40%
- Ind: 20%
- Dem: 30%
- 18-44: 10%
- 44-54: 15%
- 55-64: 25%
- 65+: 60%
- <9 Y: 5%
- 10-15 Y: 10%
- >15 Y: 30%
- Native: 40%
City Council Expansion

Question:
Would you support expanding the City Council from five to seven members, with the new members having no departmental duties?
City Council Expansion

Support: 49%
Oppose: 42%
Other: 9%
City Council Expansion

Question:
Would you be more likely or less likely to vote in favor of the Proposed Charter if the City Council was expanded to seven members?
City Council Expansion

- No Impact: 31%
- Less Likely: 33%
- More Likely: 32%
City Council Expansion

**Question:**
Should the City Council expand to seven, would you prefer creating two new Council members elected at-large, or requiring the County Supervisors to serve on the City Council?
City Council Expansion

- New Members: 50%
- County: 31%
- Other: 20%
Expansion Breakdown

- Support
- Oppose

[Bar chart showing support and opposition percentages across different categories: Men, Women, GOP, Ind, Dem, 18-44, 44-54, 55-64, 65+, <9 Y, 10-15 Y, >15 Y, Native.]
Vince:

I am writing you in your capacity as the chair of the Charter Review Commission. I will be unable to attend the hearing so these should be my submitted comments for the record:

1. The current charter, while it sets a salary for the council members, allows the salary to be changed by local law. If this is the case then I would support leaving the language as it exists. I feel strongly that the council members are badly underpaid. On the other hand, in order to make the council jobs attractive financially would require a very large and probably unpalatable increase that the public would bridle over.

2. I do not think the deputies should be required to live in the city. The escalating costs of housing in Saratoga Springs are such that the modest salaries paid to deputies would make finding affordable housing problematic but not impossible. We need the best people we can find to serve as deputies. We should eliminate any impediments we can to finding such people. As a related benefit, if they do not live in the city then they cannot be a committeeman let alone an officer in a Saratoga Springs political party. This business of whether a deputy is a committee person or officer is really not significant to me but it apparently is to others.

3. I oppose having the representatives to the county government also serve as members of the council. It is important to acknowledge that in many towns the supervisor is both the chief executive officer as well as the representative to the county government. I think the prevalence of this weakens the argument about conflict of interest. My main concern is situational. Our county government is not only poorly managed but it suffers from a severe case of cronyism. With respect to those who have and are representing us, I think the field of interested people is limited by the frustration that serving down there involves. The policy decisions, bad as they are, are exacerbated by the highly partisan manner by which the institution is run. Similar to the situation in Washington, Democrats are pretty much excluded from the decision making process. The result is that the number of
people willing to be supervisor will limit the kind of qualified candidates the city
Gould be seeking.
4. I support two year terms. The state of New York and the United States House of
Representatives have a policy of two year terms based on the need for
accountability. I think this is a sound policy that the city should continue.
5. I oppose term limits. This is an arbitrary policy. The best method for determining
the number of terms a person should serve should continue to be done through the
ballot box.
6. I support increasing the council to include two additional at large members. I think
the authors of the last attempt at charter change had a valid argument that some
people who would like to serve as members of the council do not feel qualified to
manage a city department. I think it is wise to recognize this and to address the
concern.
7. As you know, I feel strongly that the members of our land use boards should be
selected by the mayor with the advice and approval of the city council. This would
open up a process that has been opaque to the extreme. As it stands now, the
public learns about appointments only after they have been made by the mayor. I
believe some very bad appointments have been made. People may not agree with
me about those appointments but I think the public would be better served if the
process involved a very public vetting.

Thank you for the excellent job you have done chairing this very important group.
John Kaufmann

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Fwd: comments on charter

From: Vincent DeLeonardis <vincent.deleonardis@saratoga-springs.org>  
Mon, Aug 27, 2018 02:12 PM
Subject: Fwd: comments on charter
To: trish bush <trish.bush@saratoga-springs.org>

Vincent J. DeLeonardis
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Saratoga Springs City Attorney’s Office
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From: "Jane Weihe" <jane.weihe@gmail.com>
To: "vince deleonardis" <vince.deleonardis@saratoga-springs.org>
Sent: Sunday, August 19, 2018 9:07:12 PM
Subject: comments on charter

Vince,

I will not be able to attend the Charter Review Commission’s public hearing on August 21 so am submitting my comments to you in writing.

1. The issue I care most about is giving the council the ability to review and vote on the mayor’s nominees for the city’s land use boards. This would be a significant step forward in making the appointing process more transparent and would give the public an opportunity to weigh in on these nominees who have the power to significantly impact the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

2. Two year consecutive terms are also a priority for me to keep our elected officials accountable. I am also opposed to term limits which I feel is an unnecessary limit on voter choice.

3. I feel, given the cost of housing in Saratoga Springs, deputys should not have to live in the city. This requirement limits the pool of applicants. Other city employees including police and firefighters are not required to live in the city. The argument that deputys should live in the city because they will then experience the results of their decisions doesn’t make sense to me since the deputys do not make policy.

4. I support expanding the council by adding two at large members with no departmental responsibilities. I am opposed to having our county
supervisors fill these positions. The goal of adding two council members is to provide new opportunities for those who would like to run for a council position but do not want the responsibility of running a department. Filling these positions with supervisors would defeat this goal of opening up new opportunities for people to run.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Weihe
44 White Street
Saratoga Springs NY

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Fwd: Additional Representation on the City Council

From: Vincent DeLeonardis <vincent.deleonardis@saratoga-springs.org>          Mon, Aug 27, 2018 02:11 PM
Subject: Fwd: Additional Representation on the City Council
To: trish bush <trish.bush@saratoga-springs.org>

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----- Forwarded Message -----  
From: "Hank Kuczynski" <h.j.kuczynski@gmail.com>  
To: charterreview@saratoga-springs.org   
Sent: Tuesday, August 21, 2018 12:07:01 PM  
Subject: Additional Representation on the City Council

If the Two - at- Large -Commissioners do not make the final cut in the document to be presented to the voters, I would like to make a suggestion. An elected City Ombudsman. Portland, Oregon which has the Commission form of government has one. It is an emerging concept in municipal government. I think it is a concept worth considering if the Two-At Large Commissioners don't make the final cut of the proposed Charter.
Thank you for your hard work and consideration, Hank

--
Hank Kuczynski
Kuczynski Associates
153 Spring Street
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518-376-1298

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cooperation.
Fwd: please forward to council before tonight's meeting - thank you

From: Vincent DeLeonardis <vincent.deleonardis@saratoga-springs.org>  
Mon, Aug 27, 2018 02:11 PM

Subject: Fwd: please forward to council before tonight's meeting  
- thank you

To: trish.bush@saratoga-springs.org

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----- Forwarded Message -----  
From: "Sam Brewton" <sambrewton@earthlink.net>  
To: "vince.deleonardis" <vince.deleonardis@saratoga-springs.org>  
Sent: Tuesday, August 21, 2018 2:48:36 PM  
Subject: please forward to council before tonight's meeting - thank you

To the City Council,

I will be unavailable to attend tonight’s meeting but wanted voice my strong support for a measure to require full council approval of land use board appointments. My neighbors and I have been adversely affected by what we felt were questionable decisions by the land use boards. Once a decision is made there's no turning back - property and quality of life can be forever victim. The land use boards wield a large power. Appointments and public input on them are critical.

Thank you  
Sam Brewton et al  
206 Lake Ave

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