

Date: 12-9-19

Item no.: 5

From: Conder, Chuck <CConder@riversideca.gov>
Sent: Monday, December 9, 2019 1:15 PM
To: Nicol, Colleen <CNicol@riversideca.gov>
Cc: jack.clarke@bbklaw.com
Subject: Potential Changes to the Riverside City Charter

Good Afternoon Colleen, please see below and distribute for tonight's. 9 December 2019, Charter Review Commission Meeting at Hunt Park. Thank you.

To the Members of the Charter Review Commission,

First, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your voluntary service and the many hours you have put in on the Charter Review Commission. Our Charter is our Constitution and the work you are doing will insure that it remains viable to the successful future of Riverside.

It has come to my attention that one of the changes you are proposing to the Charter would be to give the Mayor full "Voting Rights" on par with the Councilmembers. **The question that must be asked is "why are you trying to change the government"?** Taking this action will be a huge mistake! First, creating an even number of votes will, in itself, cause issues. Despite what other municipalities might have experienced in the past, Riverside is not them. By virtue that the Mayor conducts the City Council meetings, among many actions, he sets the tone and pace of the meetings. This already provides him with a powerful voice and presence no Councilmember enjoys. Allowing him the further power of a vote immediately usurps the other seven Councilmembers and elevates the Mayor above all. Our form of government instantly changes and we immediately become a Mayor-Strong city. Look around California, most of the Mayor-Strong cities are Bankrupt, Crime Ridden and Corrupt!! The People, the owners of this government, would have their voices diminished even more. As a retired military officer and historian, such a change would be akin to the past practice of 5-Star Generals in the military. The federal government recognized the troubling issues this policy caused in the overall military so hence, this nation has not had a 5-Star General since the end of WWII.

If the Mayor was given such additional power over the rest of the elected Councilmembers, then I would expect that further changes to the Charter must be made stripping the Mayor of his meeting duties and placing the control of City Council meetings on a rotating weekly basis similar to the semi-annual rotating Mayor Pro-Tem duties. This further move would cause a cascading plethora of additional moves; all unnecessary at this time. I also believe elevating the Mayor to voting status will erode the elected Ward Councilmembers representation to the wards. People will be surrendering their voices to the Mayor. Again, I must ask, **"why are you trying to change the government"?**

If you feel the Mayor should have an increased voice in the operation of the government, then propose that the Mayor be given the authority to veto the Annual Budget. Section 413 of the current Charter already provides procedures for the Council to override a veto. Disagreement with such a veto still allows the Council to maintain the overall influence promised to their voting constituents by holding a veto-override vote. Again, I strongly believe elevating the Mayor to an equivalent voting position on par with the seven Councilmembers, and therefore completely changing Riverside's form of government, will be a huge mistake.

I have been told that, as the elected Councilmember representing Ward 4, I am on record before the Charter Review Commission as being in favor of the potential of elevating the Mayor to an equal voting position as the Councilmembers. If I left that impression on the commission members, I apologize. That is most definitely NOT my position. While I would be in favor of the commission exploring such a proposal (I agree all opinions should be explored) I will vehemently oppose such a change to our Charter.

Finally, I also understand there is consideration for again allowing citizens to freely pull Consent Calendar items, for discussion, from the Council agenda. I believe this would be another mistake. When that practice was allowed in the past, council meetings went on for many, many extra hours as citizens grouped together to pull virtually every consent item – just to get face time. Again, well vetted, time-tested procedures now exist allowing a constituent to request a Consent Calendar item to be pulled. I see absolutely no reason to change the current procedures and would strongly oppose this change to our city Council meeting rules.

Once again, thank you for your time and commitment to keeping Riverside a great place to live, work and enjoy our lives. I wish you all God's blessings.

Chuck Conder
Councilmember - Ward 4
951-990-9718