
Subject: FW: [External] City Charter

From: Ron Loveridge <rol820@yahoo.com>

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To: Edwards, Erin <EEwards@riversideca.gov>; Fierro, Ronaldo <RFierro@riversideca.gov>; Gaby Plascencia <gplascencia13@gmail.com>; Plascencia, Gaby <GPlascencia@riversideca.gov>; Hemenway, Steve <SHemenway@riversideca.gov>

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June greetings. I have attached my comments to the City Charter Committee. The vote by the Mayor is important for good governance, the City Council, and the community. Please read and at some point, I would like to briefly talk with you. Ron Loveridge

Ronald O. Loveridge

City Charter Committee (9/9)

Thank you to Marcia and Jack for the invitation to speak.

Folklore says that wisdom increases with age. You can be judge.

First let me highlight credentials that frame my perspective.

—I am long time political science professor. This year will be the 55th year of teaching at least one class at UCR. The focus of my teaching and research has centered on local governance/politics. I have taught Local Leadership in CA for over 30 times.

I wrote a book titled, City Managers in Legislative Politics. Now over 50 years ago, I read then almost everything that had been written on city managers and the council manager government.

For the record, I am a fellow in the National Academy of Public Administration.

—For 33 years, I was a local elected official in Riverside, 19 as Mayor and 14 as a Council member. I served longer than any other official in the history of Riverside. During these years, I was President of the League of CA Cities and the President of the National League of Cities. I had the opportunity to attend hundreds of talks and conferences on city matters.

—I am the current Program Chair for the National Civic League's Board of Directors. They were primary champions of the council manager plan in the first part of the 20th Century. The NCL also hosts the All America competition. More importantly for us, the NCL is the author of the Model City Charter, now in its 8th edition.

—One other footnote—my first city appointment was as a member in 1967 of the City's Charter Review Committee. My specific assignment was to write the section on the duties and responsibilities of the mayor.

Tonight my charter focus is on the Mayor and his or her duties and responsibilities.

The first and most important decision of any city charter is the form of government, council-manager or strong mayor.

CC: Mayor
City Council
City Manager
City Attorney
City Clerk
ACMs
DCM

Across the United States, 55% of cities are council-manager and 34% are strong mayor. In CA, out of the 482 cities, at least 470 are council-manager cities.

I strongly recommend the council-manager form for Riverside. If asked, I can explain further.

Large cities consider the strong mayor form. While not likely in my life time, I can envision a future mayor of Riverside recommending the strong mayor form and taking this change to the ballot box.

FYI—as you know, the City of San Bernardino recently changed from a strong mayor form of sorts to a council-manager form. In Southern CA, only LA and San Diego have a strong mayor form. In brief, these two mayors hire and fire department heads and they prepare and propose the budget.

In council-manager cities, the mayor is the CHIEF LEGISLATIVE LEADER. And the CHIEF EXECUTIVE is the city manager.

I cannot overemphasize that the mayor's vision, strategic approach, and facilitative skills are important for Riverside's future as a good city. I would strongly recommend you read James Svava's Facilitative Leadership in Local Government: Lessons from Successful Mayors.

The ground rules of the charter can enhance or limit the success of the mayor.

The Mayor of Riverside has the most limited duties or powers of any elected mayor in CA. I would repeat....

Let me quote directly from the National Civic League's Model City Charter. Here is what it specifically says are the appropriate powers and responsibilities of the mayor. This is what the mayor should do says the Model City Charter:

"The mayor shall be voting member of the city council and shall attend and preside at meetings of the council, represent the city in intergovernmental relationships, appoint with the advice and consent of the council the members of citizen advisory boards and commissions, present an annual state of the city message, appoint the members and officers of council committees, assign subject to the consent of council agenda items to committees, and perform other duties specified by the council. The mayor shall be recognized as head of the city government for all ceremonial purposes and by the governor for purposes of military law but shall have no administrative duties."

Noteworthy, nearly half of the powers and duties are not included in the City of Riverside Charter—and those not included are the most important to assist/frame the mayor's role as the Chief Legislative Leader.

As a charter committee, you have the opportunity, even responsibility to enhance, to expand, to take seriously the role of mayor in Riverside.

This is not a zero sum call for the city manager or for the city council. Instead, the changes should enhance their partnership, their working relationship with the mayor.

Vote

The Mayor should vote. In almost every city in CA with a directly elected mayor, the mayor votes. Riverside is a notable exception. Without voting, it is difficult to be the Chief Legislative Leader.

Vote would connect mayor with legislative process. Mayor would be accountable. Mayor would talk with council members. Mayor would prepare for each council session.

The vote is a long time personal recommendation. When I was a council member, I saw the mayor's not voting as a sweetheart position. Quick story—in the 1980's, Mayor Ab Brown appointed a city charter review committee chaired by Ivan Hinderaker, UCR Chancellor. After a long conversation, I convinced Ivan on the importance of the mayor having a vote. One night Ivan called. He said that the good news was the committee agreed that the mayor should vote. The bad news was that the Mayor Brown did not want to vote. Therefore, the city charter committee would not make such a recommendation.

The veto is an executive power. It is a negative act. There has been one veto in the last 25 years. It separates rather than joins the city council in the give and take of the legislative process. It is by far less important than voting!

The commentary on the mayor in the Model City Charter is a good read. Here is what it says about voting: “Communities should avoid granting special voting status to the mayor (e.g., vote on council only to make or break a tie). Such power will likely impede rather than enhance the mayor’s capacity to lead. Similarly, giving the mayor veto power in a council-manager city cannot help but confuse his or her role with that of the executive mayor in a mayor-council city.”

Intergovernmental Representative

The mayor should represent the City on major regional bodies. This should be the mayor’s choice, not the city council. In terms of resources and services, regional groups will be increasingly more important. The mayor is the city’s best representative—full time, staffed, represent entire city.

Boards and Commissions

The mayor represents the entire city. The mayor can select board and commission members to represent the entire city, not just representation by wards. Mayor is likely to select more diverse and inclusive members. Appointments will more closely tie the mayor to the views and recommendations of board and commission members.

Council Committees

Appointing council committees will greatly enhance the Mayor’s role as the Chief Legislative Leader. Mayor will have contact, and influence, with council members. It is time for the mayor to lead the legislative process and NOT be separate from it.

Two final points—first, I do not often look to San Bernardino for direction. However, on the duties and powers of the mayor, their new city charter says, “Shall participate in the vote to appoint or remove the City Manager, City Attorney, and City Clerk and fix their compensation....” It makes clear the role of the mayor. There is no ambiguity. Currently in Riverside, the mayor is an invited guest, with no formal role or vote. The mayor should participate in the hiring, firing, and compensation of the city manager, city attorney, and city clerk. Why not?

And second, Mark Funkhouser, publisher of Governing Magazine, wrote a column in January, 2018 titled, “Defining Leadership Success.” He asks what constitutes success for a mayor or a city manager? “To me, success means leaving the community in better shape than you found it. That may sound somewhat squishy and hard to measure, but it is possible to apply a fairly rigorous evidence-based, outcome-focused assessment of the extent to which public officials accomplish that goal by evaluating the community along five dimensions: finances, social capital, infrastructure, shared prosperity, and involvement in a regional network.” He goes on to explain and illustrate these dimensions. For your readings, I have copies of this article and will leave them with your chairs.

In closing, leadership success depends, in part, on the rules of the game. You can enhance/strengthen the role of the mayor as Chief Legislative Leader and therefore make Riverside a better governed community.