



**AGENDA**  
**CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING**  
**ST. LOUIS PARK, MINNESOTA**  
**January 10, 2018**  
**5:30 p.m. – City Hall, Community Room**

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The mission of the Charter Commission is to evaluate and propose changes which are warranted in the city Home Rule Charter as provided by State Statute. Home Rule Charters are, in effect local constitutions passed by local voters and cannot conflict with state laws. Commissioners are appointed by the Chief Judge of Hennepin County District Court and serve on a volunteer basis. (Commissioners are not appointed by City Council.) Staff provides assistance to prepare agendas and performs other administrative duties.

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Roll Call & Attendance**
3. **Approval of Minutes** – December 6, 2017 Charter Commission Meeting
4. **Old Business**
  - a. Executive Committee Proposal on Public Process to be used for Proposed Charter Amendment related to Ranked Choice Voting
5. **New Business**
6. **Future Meetings**
7. **Communications**
  - a. Public communications received by staff since December 6, 2017 meeting
8. **Adjourn**

**For more information or questions regarding this agenda,  
please contact Melissa Kennedy at 952- 928-2840  
or Chair Sara Maaske at [smaaske@outlook.com](mailto:smaaske@outlook.com)**

**Auxiliary aids for individuals with disabilities are available upon request.  
To make arrangements, please call Administrative Services at 952-924-2525.**



**UNOFFICIAL MINUTES  
CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING  
ST. LOUIS PARK, MINNESOTA  
December 6, 2017  
5:30 p.m. – Community Room, City Hall**

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**1. Call to Order**

Chair Maaske called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

**2. Roll Call and Attendance**

Members Present: Maren Anderson, JC Beckstrand, Jim Brimeyer, Gary Carlson, Jim de Lambert, Terry Dwyer, David Dyer, Matthew Flory, Ken Gothberg, Sara Maaske, Erin Smith, and Henry Solmer.

Members Absent: Lynne Carper, Ron Jarvi, Jr., Andrew Rose

Others Present: Nancy Deno (Deputy City Manager/HR Director), Soren Mattick (City Attorney)

**3. Approval of Minutes**

*It was moved by Commissioner Beckstrand, seconded by Commissioner Flory, to approve the minutes of October 24. The motion passed 12-0.*

**4. Old Business**

**a. Proposed Charter Amendments related to Ranked Choice Voting and Campaign Finance Contribution Limits**

Chair Maaske asked the commission if they would first discuss campaign finance contribution limits then ranked choice voting. Commission was in consensus of this order of discussion.

Chair Maaske asked Attorney Mattick to provide information on the finance contribution limits. Mr. Mattick stated that the limits in the charter could change to reflect limits allowed in Minnesota Statutes. If limits change again, this language would allow for a change with no other action or amendments needed. There was discussion by commission.

*It was moved by Commissioner Brimeyer and seconded by Commissioner Carlson to recommend to the city council to amend the ordinance section 12.04 Contributions as presented by the City Attorney Mattick. Motion passed 12-0.*

Chair Maaske asked City Attorney Mattick to provide information on the request from council on ranked choice voting and the draft of possible charter amendments. He stated the council adopted a resolution that requested the charter commission study and make a recommendation to the city council as to whether the city's charter should be amended to provide for the use of RCV. If the charter commission moved ahead, the language is brief and an example has been provided. The change would be adding 4.08 Voting Method. With language the voters elect the city's elected officer by single transferable voting (also known as "ranked-choice voting" or "instant-runoff voting"). The City Council must provide by ordinance the method of counting the votes and breaking a tie. He stated the question of the charter commission is at the policy level, and the

method of how the votes are counted and technical matters would be developed and approved by the City Council if this is the method that is put in place.

Chair Maaske stated at the last meeting the commission discussed public process. She asked that the commission discuss public process.

Commissioner Gothberg stated that discussion on a public process would assume that we are interested in possibly moving in the direction to change the charter and he stated he is not certain that is the direction of the commission. He stated he would like to hear an update from each member to determine what commissioners have to say since the last meeting.

Commissioner Beckstrand asked Attorney Mattick about the term single transferable voting. Attorney Mattick stated this is the language used by Minneapolis to define this change in voting. In the past it was also called instant runoff voting and there also has been a legal question of use of the term ranked choice voting. Commissioner Beckstrand stated it may be confusing to use this term. Attorney Mattick stated he would do further research on this, and that language and terms used must be able to withstand a constitutional challenge. There was discussion about the overall need for education and helping people understand.

Commissioner Maaske asked to hear from each commissioner.

Commissioner Solmer stated he is interested in making the change to allow ranked choice voting. He discussed the Ward 1 recent election. He also stated he watched Minneapolis and they were able to get their counts completed in one day.

Commissioner Smith stated she is in the same place as the last discussion and would like to move forward with ranked choice voting.

Commissioner Gothberg stated he cannot support ranked choice voting and does not see any problem to be solved. He stated there is no defined need and feels it encourages deal-making. There are additional financial resources needed to make this happen. It is estimated an additional one hundred fifteen to one hundred forty five thousand dollars is needed and these funds could be used to better serve residents or for real problems. He talked about how RCV does not guarantee 50%, how to handle a tie and factors against non-traditional or spoilers. He stated he received two calls to support RCV and when he asked them why St. Louis Park he was told it is for better state and federal results, and they were told to go back to the cities. He stated this method is not allowed for federal or state elections. He stated that if the charter commission determines it should move ahead, this should go on the ballot and let the people make the determination.

Commissioner Flory stated he is open, not an opponent, and is a skeptic. He questioned what problem RCV is trying to solve, and said he is not sure of a problem. He would like it on a ballot, to have a public process, to discuss this as “measure twice, cut once” before any decision is made. He is not convinced any change is needed and also that Minneapolis elected Mayor Sayles Belton in the past without RCV.

Commissioner de Lambert stated he is in favor to pursue.

Commissioner Carlson stated he has not changed his opinion since the last meeting. He discussed how he watched the administration of Minneapolis and St. Paul and this second time was much smoother. He talked to candidates and they told him it was more positive campaigning. He does not see a need for a referendum because there is a reverse referendum process if needed.

Commissioner Brimeyer stated he hasn't changed his mind since the last meeting but he has changed his thinking. He met with a group of individuals, one who owns assisted living in the city and was told the seniors in the building are confused about voting with the current method and did not think this change is in their best interest. He was told that it is important that people are able to understand and use a voting system and RCV would be too confusing. Commissioner Brimeyer stated he is interested in holding listening sessions and if we move ahead, extensive educational processes. He suggested the League of Women voters could and should assist with both. He suggested that it will take time to make the decision and various options of informational panels that would be put in place for education and listening sessions. He wanted to make sure to reach out to all populations in the city and people who do not traditionally attend public meetings and get their input. He stated he disagrees with concerns on the financial cost because if there was a referendum it would be costly to run that process. He does not agree that this should go on a ballot.

Commissioner Beckstrand stated he is in the middle, he is not convinced and wonders what problem is trying to be solved. He stated he needs more evidence, more than anecdotes; he has not seen a study. He stated he did not know of the media event early in the week and wonders why he was not contacted by those hosting the event and why the commission was excluded, not part of the process. Commissioner Beckstrand stated he wants more data that would allow him to make a more informed decision. He is in favor of a public process with listening sessions and allowing others to communicate and ask questions.

Commissioner Anderson stated she is on the fence. She is open. She has heard that ranked choice voting is difficult for the public and has talked to people in Minneapolis. Commissioner Anderson has concerns of the costs and if funds are used for this it takes the funding away from other things that are needed.

Commissioner Dwyer stated he is in favor of ranked choice voting and has observed Minneapolis and St. Paul. He stated we are not solving a current problem today and this may help solve future issues. He agreed that there is not a lot of data at this time. He stated that we have created plurality by eliminating the primary.

Commissioner Dyer stated he would be in favor of moving ahead with ranked choice voting. He stated that this should be done by a vote of the people since it is about the vote of the people.

Chair Maaske stated she is on the fence. She stated she is in favor of more voter turnout and to widen the field. Chair Maaske stated she is not convinced that RCV makes it easier to choose to run for office as a new candidate. She fails to see the problem and wants to hear from residents. Chair Maaske talked about how it may be good to explore some other options such as our current ward and at-large system, that there may be other different ways to study. Chair Maaske stated that no matter where we head, she would like to have a very robust public process. She continued to discuss various types of public process, locations, method of listening sessions, education and outreach possibilities.

Commissioner Brimeyer talked about funds, no need for referendum.

Commissioner Gothberg stated a good public process is needed and ballot is a method that includes a detailed public process requiring education and communication. He stated it is important to get other populations involved and this could easily be put on the next ballot.

Commissioner Flory talked about other possible changes with voting and possibly exploring at-large and wards. He talked about education sessions and getting more people out to vote. There was more discussion in general about at-large and ward seats.

The commission discussed public process for the charter commission. Questions were about what the commission may want for a public process, what it would look like, where, how many, how to reach people, how to gather information, neighborhoods. Questions came up on how to inform, what to inform, how to get others to provide information on the current process, what is the purpose, how to educate, how to reach people of color to run, how public process in Vision was conducted, listening sessions by ward, how long are the sessions, how long would this process take. There was comment on possible large education session to be recorded then determine how to hold listening sessions and locations.

Commission discussed having the charter commission executive committee form a small group to study and draft a public process for review by the full commission. The commission talked about the small work group and having 4 or 5 members.

*Motion was made by Commissioner Beckstrand and seconded by Commissioner Gothberg to have the executive members work as a small group with 2 additional members to develop a proposed model for public process and report back to the commission on their recommendation at their next regular meeting. Members would be Chair Maaske, Vice Chair Dyer, Secretary Dwyer, Commissioner Beckstrand and Commissioner Smith. Motion approved 12 - 0*

**5. New Business**

**6. Future Meetings**

The Charter Commission scheduled their next meeting for January 10th at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in City Hall.

**7. Communications - None**

**8. Adjournment**

*It was moved by Commissioner Carlson, seconded by Commissioner Anderson, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed 12-0.*

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by: Nancy Deno, Deputy City Manager

**TITLE:** Executive Committee Proposal on Public Process to be used for Proposed Charter Amendment related to Ranked Choice Voting

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On December 6, 2017 the Charter Commission formed an executive committee comprised of five (5) members to develop a public process proposal for consideration by the Charter Commission at their next regular meeting. The members of the executive committee met on December 27, 2017.

The proposal that was developed by the group is attached for review and consideration by the Charter Commission.

**Attachments:** Public Process Proposal

**Prepared by:** Melissa Kennedy, City Clerk



# PUBLIC PROCESS PROPOSAL

The council directive is asking the Charter Commission to **study and make a recommendation** as to whether the City's Charter should or should not be amended to provide for the use of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in municipal elections.

## Expert Q&A Panel

This session's intent is to bring a variety of voices to the table who can answer questions posed by the Charter Commission and speak to their professional or personal experience with Ranked Choice Voting as it relates to their position in the election process. Suggested participants:

- Secretary of State's office
- Hennepin County Elections Equipment Specialist
  - Comments: This person would be more equipped to speak to the capabilities of our current voting equipment (DS200), how it is used in Minneapolis, and how the equipment may change in the future pending certification at the State level.
- Election Judge
  - 2 from SLP (Chair Judge)
    - Comments: Having multiple experienced judges may provide more insight into Election Day activities and ideas about the challenges/benefits judges may face using RCV to administer a municipal election.
  - 1 from Minneapolis AND 1 from St. Paul (Chief Judge)
    - Comments: A head judge from each municipality may provide a better representation of and experience with actual work at polling places where RCV is used.
- Elected official –
  - Pro - ???????
  - Con – Barb Johnson
- League of Women Voters
  - Comments: LWV SLP are vested in local election activity in our city and represent voters in this community.

This would be a Charter Commission meeting that is open to public. Comments would be limited to the Q&A session between the Charter Commission and the panelists. Comments/responses from panelists would be limited to 2-3 minutes per question.

Comments: Time limits would ensure that all panelists have an opportunity to be heard and that responses are focused on the actual questions posed by the Charter Commission.

The city and Charter Commission would promote the meeting through all appropriate channels to encourage attendance and public education.

## **Charter Commission Meeting**

**Option A** - This would be a regular meeting structure with the expectation of a vote on the Council directive following public comment. The Charter Commission will open the meeting for public comment on whether the City's Charter should or should not be amended to provide for the use of Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) in municipal elections. Individual comments from the public will be limited to 3 minutes per person.

**Option B** – This would be a listening session structure in which the Charter Commission would ask for public input on the topic with it being clear that a decision on a recommendation to the council would not be made at that meeting. Individual comments from the public will be limited to 3 minutes per person.

Comments: Option B affords the Charter Commission the opportunity to hear public comment and then reflect on the comments received prior to making a decision/recommendation.

The city and Charter Commission would promote the meeting through all appropriate channels to encourage attendance and gain a diverse set of voices to speak to the proposed change.

## **Next Steps**

1. Charter Commission determine above process
2. Clarify questions for panelists
3. Set tentative dates and location for both meetings
4. Staff coordinate and secure panelists, location and any other needs.

## Melissa Kennedy

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**From:** Deb Brinkman <deb.brinkman@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 07, 2017 11:24 AM  
**To:** Melissa Kennedy  
**Subject:** Media Briefing Information for the Charter Commission  
**Attachments:** RCV Media Briefing Information.docx

Hi Melissa,  
I put together some information from the most recent Ranked Choice Voting Media Briefings.  
Can you please forward it to the Charter Commission.

I will also forward it to the City Council Members.

Thank you!

Deb

Deb Brinkman  
612-803-6142  
LWV St. Louis Park  
[www.lwvslp.org](http://www.lwvslp.org)



Educate. Advocate. Reform.



LEAGUE OF  
WOMEN VOTERS  
OF ST. LOUIS PARK

**Ranked Choice Voting Media Briefing  
November 9, 2017**

**Minneapolis leaders discuss the impact of Ranked Choice Voting on the November 2017 election.**

**Link to the recording of the Minneapolis Press Conference.**

**Ranked Choice Voting Media Briefing  
December 5, 2017**

**St. Louis Park leaders discuss lessons learned in the 2017 Ranked Choice Voting municipal elections in Minneapolis and St. Paul.**

**Link to the recording of the St Louis Park Media Briefing.**

**Key successes from Minneapolis and St. Paul elections**

- **Surge in voter turnout *more than two decades***
- **Historic diversity in slates of candidates who ran and candidates who won**
  - **Minneapolis elected the most diverse city council in history**
  - **St. Paul elected its first African American mayor**
- **Statistics show that voters understood the power of ranking**
  - **Nearly 90 percent of Minneapolis voters ranking their ballot**
  - **Minneapolis had a valid ballot percentage of 99.999%**
  - **76 percent of the voters in St. Paul ranked their ballots**
- **Candidates demonstrated the power of reaching out beyond their base for second and third choice support**
- **Candidates held more civic and issue focused campaigns**

**Key lesson learned:**

**This election demonstrated the power of giving voters more choice and more voice**

## Media Briefing Advisory December 5, 2017

St. Louis Park leaders to discuss lessons learned in the 2017 Ranked Choice Voting municipal elections in Minneapolis and St. Paul.

Link to both recordings: <http://www.lwvslp.org/advocate.html>.

**What:** High voter turnout, diverse outcomes, fast results and other key lessons learned in the November 7 Ranked Choice Voting municipal elections in Minneapolis and St. Paul will be discussed, including opportunities for questions by members of the news media.

**Where:** St. Louis Park City Hall

**When:** Tuesday, December 5 at 3:30 p.m.

**Who:** League of Women Voters-St. Louis Park former president Deb Brinkman will facilitate discussion with Minneapolis candidates, St. Louis Park elected officials and other community leaders about the impact of Ranked Choice Voting on elections in Minneapolis and St Paul in this year's elections. Participants will reflect on how these election outcomes are relevant as St. Louis Park considers adopting this alternative election system.

Brinkman will be joined by Councilmember Sue Sanger, Metropolitan Council and FairVote Minnesota board member Gail Dorfman, recent Human Rights Commission member Zaylor Stout, civic engagement leader Catherine Gray, St. Louis Park resident and Latino community leader Arco Bodayo. Minneapolis councilmembers-elect and other St. Louis Park community leaders are also invited to attend.

**Why:** Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has been in use in Minneapolis since 2009 and in St. Paul since 2011, providing voters with more choice and more power in a single decisive election in November. Voters are proving they understand and prefer Ranked Choice Voting. An analysis of the impact Ranked Choice Voting is having on the democratic process in the Twin Cities is beneficial as St. Louis Park considers adopting RCV.

**About League of Woman Voters-St. Louis Park:** The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues and influences public policy through education and advocacy.

### Media Contacts:

Deb Brinkman | (612) 803-6142 | [deb.brinkman@gmail.com](mailto:deb.brinkman@gmail.com)

Sue Sanger | (952) 926-4192 | [suesanger@comcast.net](mailto:suesanger@comcast.net)

**Media Briefing Advisory November 9, 2017**  
**High Voter Turnout and other impacts of Ranked Choice Voting on the Minneapolis and St. Paul  
Municipal Elections**

**What:** Media briefing on the impact of Ranked Choice Voting on the November 7 municipal elections in Minneapolis and St. Paul, including opportunities for questions by members of the news media.

**Where:** Minneapolis City Hall Rotunda, 350 South 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Minneapolis.

**When:** Thursday, November 9, 2017 at 2 p.m.

**Who:** Minneapolis Councilmember Elizabeth Glidden, who led the adoption of Ranked Choice Voting in Minneapolis as past Elections Committee Chair, will facilitate comment from candidates and newly elected local officials about the impact of Ranked Choice Voting on elections in Minneapolis and St Paul. Ranked Choice Voting, an election process reform considered for adoption by jurisdictions throughout Minnesota and across the country, continues to showcase its positive impact on voter participation.

Glidden will be joined by FairVote Minnesota Executive Director Jeanne Massey, Mayor-elect Jacob Frey, Council Member Kevin Reich, Council Member-elect Jeremiah Ellison, Council Member-elect Phillippe Cunningham, Park Board Member Brad Bourn, and Mayoral candidates Raymond Dehn and Nekima Levy-Pounds. We are waiting for confirmation from other candidates.

**Why:** Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has been in use in Minneapolis since 2009 and since 2011 in St. Paul, providing voters with more choice and more power in a single decisive election in November. Voters are proving they understand and like Ranked Choice Voting. An analysis of the impact it is having on our local democratic process is beneficial as more communities explore RCV for their elections.

**About FairVote Minnesota:** FairVote Minnesota ([www.fairvotemn.org](http://www.fairvotemn.org)) is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to a better democracy through public education and advocacy. Our focus is on voting systems that lead to greater competitiveness, better representation and more participation in elections.

**Media Contacts:**

Minneapolis City Council Vice President Elizabeth Glidden | [\(612\) 673-2208](tel:6126732208) | [elizabeth.glidden@minneapolismn.gov](mailto:elizabeth.glidden@minneapolismn.gov)

Jeanne Massey | [\(612\) 850-6897](tel:6128506897) | [jeanne.massey@fairvotemn.org](mailto:jeanne.massey@fairvotemn.org)

## Melissa Kennedy

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**From:** Mary Armstrong <maryarmstrong212@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Friday, December 08, 2017 6:40 AM  
**To:** Melissa Kennedy  
**Subject:** I support RCV!

Good morning,  
Please pass on the following to the Charter Commission. Thank you.

Dear Charter Commission members,  
I am writing to express my enthusiastic support for ranked-choice voting in St. Louis Park. We have seen it work successfully in Minneapolis and St. Paul. I realize that it will take a certain amount of voter education, but I believe it is the right way to go for our city. My very favorite part of this method is how it allows candidates to compete to win over voters instead of competing solely against each other. This can only help lessen the rancor that sometimes consumes electoral politics. I also believe this system can help encourage more candidates to run for office. Let's do our part to make our election process into a more civil, inclusive playing field. Please adopt RCV in SLP!

Sincerely,  
Mary Armstrong  
2565 Xenwood

## Melissa Kennedy

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**From:** Katherine Kaufer Christoffel <kathychristoffel@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 19, 2017 10:21 AM  
**To:** Melissa Kennedy  
**Subject:** RCV-It's time

To the Charter Commission,

I am writing to support current efforts to bring Ranked Candidate Voting to St. Louis Park. My understanding is that there is widespread support for this approach to voting, which increases the voice of all voters in the process of elections. One important effect is diversification in elected officials where RCV is in place, making government increasingly representative. I know this is a goal that all in SLP share. Further, I understand that it is within the purview of the City Council to put RCV in place without a referendum, and urge that this should be done for reasons of timeliness and efficiency.

To accomplish this, I call on the Commission to hold a timely public hearing to get input from the community, and to make a recommendation on RCV for adoption by the City Council soon thereafter.

Thank you for your consideration.

Katherine Kaufer Christoffel  
3920 Excelsior Blvd, 55416