

Brooklyn Park Charter Commission Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, December 11, 2024, 7:00 p.m.
City Hall Room A203

1. Call to Order/Roll Call

Present: Commissioners Barbara Bor, Peggy Larkin, Dennis Secara, LaDawn Severin, Shamara Freeman, Scott Simmons, and Gregory Szach.

Absent: Commissioners Sunday Alabi (excused), Amy Hanson (excused), Adam Hunt, Shamara Freeman, Susan Maberera and Council Liaison Nichole Klonowski.

Staff Present: Cindy Devonish, Community Experience and Engagement Manager, Jennifer Gooden, Deputy City Clerk, Jason Newby, Inspections & Environmental Health Manager

2. Public Comment – None.

3. Additions/Approval of the Agenda of December 11, 2024

Motion Chair Secara, Second Commissioner Larkin to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes

4.1 SEPTEMBER 11, 2024, REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Commissioner Simmons had a minor correction to the meeting minutes.

Motion Commissioner Secara, second Commissioner Severin to approve the September 11, 2024, regular meeting minutes as amended. The motion carried.

5. Old Business – None.

6. New Business

6.1 Code Enforcement and Administrative Penalties in Brooklyn Park

Chair Secara presented a recent article from the Star Tribune regarding the Code Enforcement issues in the City of St. Paul.

6.2 Presentation on Code Enforcement in Brooklyn Park – Jason Newby, Inspections and Environmental Health Manager

Inspections and Environmental Health Manager Newby briefed the Commissioners regarding the Administrative Enforcement options within the city. He explained there were options such as penalties, administrative hearings, and special assessments. He reviewed the Environmental Health process on how complaints were handled and the proactive approach the department used for corrective inspections.

Mr. Newby reported the common nuisances and complaints handled with Environmental Health included garbage, long grass, junk and inoperable vehicles. He stated there was a fee schedule for the violations if they had not complied, however, since the system was created in 2015 to have

residents comply with the violation, there had been a 90% compliance rate.

Mr. Newby reported fines were still assessed as special assessments to property taxes, but most were for unpaid water bills. He said very few non-compliant fines were assessed and explained the process of appealing the fee before it was assessed.

Mr. Newby explained the program was created in 2015 and had been recognized nationally and locally. It was a system that had changed from enforcement driven to complaint driven. He stated prior to 2015, the city would drive by and notify residents by mail of the violation. With the new program, the city would knock on the door and help, it was more time for the correction or offer suggestions. He stated that door knocking, door hangers and brochures have been very beneficial and had shown improvement in compliance.

Mr. Newby reviewed with the Commissioners the City View program that was available to view. He stated it allowed residents to see the violation in an area, what inspections had taken place and what permits had been issued. He stated the mapping ability had helped tremendously.

Commissioner Larkin inquired about what problems were not being addressed. She inquired if there were certain areas that required an adjustment to fee amounts if a citation was issued.

Mr. Newby stated in nine years, no homes had been lost due to the program. He stated the fees were all the same for the neighborhoods in the city. He explained the options of appealing the fee during the time the payment was due. He stated there were very few abatements made by the city.

Commissioner Larkin inquired about the amount of unpaid water bills that were assessed to a property.

Mr. Newby reported he would have to get that information from the Utility Billing Department and could provide it later. He reminded the Commissioners the assessed fees were usually collected at the closing of the house when a house was sold.

Community Experience and Engagement Manager Devonish inquired about the process of when wages were garnished and what payment schedule was available to residents.

Mr. Newby stated he was not aware of any issues with wage garnishments and citations. He stated that specific question would be a finance department question.

7. Reports of Officers, Boards, and Standing Committee – None.

8. Correspondence/Communications

Commissioner Bor requested the attendance record for Council Liaison Klonowski be reviewed. She remarked that Council Liaison Klonowski had a low attendance presence at the Charter Commission meetings. Commissioner Bor recommended an alternative Council Member be present at the meetings if the appointed Council Liaison could not attend.

Chair Secara agreed that a second Council Member be present at the meeting.

Commissioner Simmons suggested the Charter Commission attend a work session with the City Council to review and explain the City Charter and how it worked.

Commissioner Simmons reported January 2025 would be his last Charter Commission meeting as he was moving.

Chair Secara reported the City Council rejected amendments to Sections 4.03 and 2.06. He reported he had attended the Council meetings and there were not enough votes to pass the amendments and there was an agreement amongst the Council members.

Commissioner Larkin inquired if the amendments could be brought back to the City Council for consideration. She felt if the Council Liaison or a Council Member was present for the Charter Commission meetings, there might be a better understanding of the proposed changes.

Chair Secara reported it was not currently on the agenda, but it was an item that could be added to the work plan in January.

9. Adjournment

Motion Commissioner Secara, second by Commissioner Larkin to adjourn the meeting. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jennifer Gooden,
Staff Liaison