

## The City Charter and The Review Board

By Ira Goldmn

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*On the 18th of May 2005, the first meeting of the Charter Review Advisory Board met in the Commission Chambers at Parkland City Hall. The objective of this Board is to look over the City Charter. To quote Andrew Maurodis, our City Attorney, from the approved minutes of this meeting, the reason for a City Charter is “to set forth the form of government and the powers of that government.”*

*Let me begin with a little background on our Parkland City Charter. The editor’s note, which appears at the bottom of page 1 of the Charter and establishes the acceptance of the Charter says, “Printed herein is the Home Rule Charter of the City, Ordinance No. 70, adopted in a referendum held on November 2, 1982.” The Home Rule Charter noted in the above quote relates to Florida State Law, the Municipal Home Rule Powers Act, F.S. Sec. 166.041. At the opening meeting of the Charter Review Advisory Board on the 18th of May, Mr. Maurodis explained to the members, which I am one of the nine members that it is up to us to decide whether any amendments are needed to be made to the current charter. He went on to explain that if there are amendments made, a public hearing on the proposed changes would have to be called for public input. Then the recommended or proposed changes have to go to the City Commission. The City Commission would then have to adopt a City ordinance which would call for a referendum on any amendments to the Charter. The City Charter can not be amended except by the vote of the electorate.*

*Mr. Maurodis went on to tell us that there is no standard that sets the way the Advisory Board must precede in their work. In other words, if the Board does not complete its work by November 2006 (the proposed deadline) for the Charter amendment referendums to be placed on the ballot, then the process will continue until completed. Although all 12 articles of the Charter will be studied, there is no reason not to keep the Charter “simple and brief”. (Charter Review Advisory Board Minutes of June 8, 2005, page 3, section 4, “Review of Present City Charter”) To continue, “Mr. Maurodis asked that the Board keep in mind practical constraints as they would ultimately set a referendum of perhaps six or seven charter issues.” (Ibid.)*

*The goal of the Board is to provide a “finished product” ”. (Charter Review Advisory Board Minutes of June 8, 2005, page 4, section 4, “Review of Present City Charter”) and that “The Commission could then pick and choose what changes they wished to make, and accept or revise some or all of the changes. He confirmed that the Board was an advisory board.” (Ibid.) This means that all, some or none of the changes – if any recommendations come from the Board – can be accepted or rejected by the Commission. I will report, in future issues, with more information as the review continues.*

*As I stated above, there are nine members of the Board. This board serves at the behest of the Commission, with five members being selected by the Commissioners and four members are ‘at large’. The terms of the Board members run from one to three years. Seven of the nine are sitting members. They are: Richard Josepher, the Chairperson, Howard Nadel, the Vice Chair, Melanie Cordover, Deborah Hausman, Marilyn Krantz, Dodie Lazowick and me. Vivian Silbiger and Salvatore Conza are the*

*two alternates. The nine of us are to systematically compare our Charter with eight other local City Charters, the Broward County Charter and the National Civic Leagues Model City Charter, 8th Edition. The Parkland Charter is 13 pages long, while the other Charters we are perusing are as much as 100 pages.*

*What does our City Charter set forth as to the form and the powers of our government? To answer this question, I will succinctly describe each of the 13 Articles in the following paragraph. I requested our City Clerk, Sandra Couzzo, to have our Charter put on the City website. By the time you read this piece, the Charter should be available, for your edification, @: [www.cityofparkland.org](http://www.cityofparkland.org).*

*Article I — TRANSITION: States the title of the Charter, Definition of municipality, Corporate limits and Expansion and contraction of the municipality. Article II — GENERAL POWERS: Powers of the City, Powers to be liberally construed, Intergovernmental relations, Extraterritorial powers, Title to public property and streets. Article III — THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COMMISSION: City Commission, Districts, Term of office, Oath of office, Compensation, Regular and special meetings, Presiding Officer. Article IV — ELECTIONS: Proclaiming the election, Non-partisan election, Qualifications, Date of elections, Tie vote, Vacancies. Article V — CITY MANAGER: Appointment, Removal, Non-interference. Article VI — CITY CLERK: Appointment, Duties, Bond. Article VII — EMERGENCY ORDINANCES: Procedure. Article VIII — SALE OF CITY PROPERTY: Procedure for sale. Article IX — FISCAL YEAR: Fiscal year. Article X — STATUS OF FORMER CHARTER, ORDINANCES, RESOLUTIONS AND OFFICERS: Former Charter, Ordinances and resolutions continuing, Repeal of conflicting laws, ordinances and resolutions, Rights of City Commissioners and employees, Pending matters. Article XI — SEVERABILITY: Saving clauses. Article XII — REFERENDUM AND EFFECTIVE DATE: Effective date, Form of ballot, Placing ballot on general election. Article XIII — ZONING: AE-1 and AE-2 zoning classifications. I recommend that we all take the time to read, understand, ask questions of our Commissioners and come to the Charter Review Advisory Board meetings. It is here, that we will all see the ‘inner workings’ of our government in action. To find out the date and time of the next meeting, call the City Clerk’s Office @: 954.753.5040 or email @ [info@cityofparkland.org](mailto:info@cityofparkland.org). See you all at the next Charter Review Advisory Board meeting.*

*Ira Goldman has lived in Parkland, with his family - including the one and only Barney the poodle - since 1991. He has been a member of the Parkland Planning and Zoning Board and an officer and board member of his HOA. He presently serves on the City Charter Commission and is a board member of the Parkland Friends of the Library. He loves to write for the Parklander and to receive email from his readers at [ira@theparklander.com](mailto:ira@theparklander.com).*