



## **Public Input Sought on Proposed City Charter Changes**

The City Charter of the City of Freeport is like the city's *Constitution*. Unlike Ordinances codified in the City Code of Ordinance, the Charter is fixed and may not be changed unless voted for by the electorate in a charter election. Every so often an official review of the Charter is conducted, and changes may be recommended to council, who can vote to put those changes before the citizens of the Freeport for their consideration in a Charter Election.

Over a series of meetings held late last year the City of Freeport Charter Review Committee met to go through the City Charter in detail with the City Attorney.

They have made the following recommendations for Council consideration regarding the following 16 questions to be placed upon the upcoming ballot:

1. Shall the Charter be amended to authorize City Council to correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors in the Charter?
2. Shall the Charter be amended to provide that the filling of vacancies on City Council be consistent with Article 11, Section 11 of the Texas Constitution?
3. Shall the Charter be amended to authorize City Council to update all references in the City's Charter to current State law?
4. Shall the Charter be amended to authorize City Council to update all references to City Clerk to now read City Secretary?
5. Shall the Charter be amended to authorize City Council to make all references to persons or positions gender neutral?
6. Shall Section 3.14 of the Charter be amended to accurately reflect the City's annual audit requirements under State law?
7. Shall the Charter be amended to require the Chief of Police to establish a place of residency within 30 miles from the City?
8. Shall the Charter be amended to update the qualifications and duties of the Health Officer to reflect current City practice and the role of a Municipal Health Officer?
9. Proposition #9: Shall the Charter be amended to require the Fire Chief to act as the chief administrative officer of the department of Fire and EMS and to establish a place of residency within 30 miles from the City?

10. Shall the Charter be amended to allow one hundred and eighty (180) days to submit signatures for a petition, which is consistent with State and Federal law?
11. Shall the Charter be amended to remove the use of the word “slum districts” and replace with “substandard structures”?
12. Shall the Charter be amended to update personal interest prohibitions to be consistent with State law?
13. Shall the Charter be amended to update claims for damages against the City to be consistent with current State law?
14. Shall the Charter be amended to remove the obsolete section concerning Interim Municipal Government?
15. Shall the Charter be amended to update the procedure for amending the Charter to be consistent with current State and Federal law?
16. Shall the Charter be amended to remove the obsolete section concerning the initial submission of the Charter to voters for original approval?

While most of these questions are good housekeeping revisions in nature, a few of them offer substantive change including questions 7, 9 and 10. The City attorney has prepared the attached which redlines the proposed changes to the charter. Council is asking residents to review and familiarize themselves with the proposed changes and provide any input in their regard, prior to Council voting to put the changes officially on a ballot for a charter election.