

Late Backup

#60
2-28-08

RESOLUTION NO.

WHEREAS, on December 21, 2007 the Charter Revision Committee based on a four to two vote, with one member absent, recommended that the City Council move forward with placing the issue of Single Member Districts on the ballot but did not recommend a plan or map; and

WHEREAS, the sample maps and plans recommended by J. Gerald Hebert, Voting Rights Act consultant, were based on the 2000 Census, and

WHEREAS, no proposed map has been submitted to the Justice Department for comment; and

WHEREAS, the African American population in Austin has decreased as a percentage of the Austin population and has geographically dispersed; and

WHEREAS, a single member district system runs the risk of eliminating African American representation on the City Council, of diluting the voting strength of African American representatives on the City Council and of diluting the voting strength of African Americans in City Council elections; and

WHEREAS, any district system would likely increase the size and cost of representation; and

WHEREAS, if a district system were approved by Austin voters prior to the 2010 Census, the district boundaries would have to be redistricted after the 2010 Census; and

WHEREAS, any change to a district or hybrid district/at-large system would also require the establishment of a redistricting scheme and the creation of a transition plan that includes plans for when the current Council would resign; and

WHEREAS, any change to a district or hybrid district/at-large system would potentially also require amendments to Charter provisions relating to staggered elections for the Council and to term limits; and

WHEREAS, the current City Council Charter limits campaign contributions outside of the city, any change to a district or hybrid/at large system would also require the consideration of alternative methods to finance city council elections, **NOW, THEREFORE,**

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

The Austin City Council establishes the following criteria that must be met before the City Council will consider any proposal to place a charter election amendment for a Single Member District or Hybrid District form of representation on the ballot.

- The Charter Revision Committee must recommend a specific district plan after receiving extensive public input on proposed maps; and
- The specific map presented for Council consideration must maintain communities of interest; and
- The Council must submit the proposed plan to the Justice Department to receive comments and incorporate any Justice Department recommendations into any plan placed on the ballot; and

- The Charter Revision Committee must recommend a plan for how Council redistricting will be conducted, including how often redistricting will take place, who will draw the lines and how the redistricting process will guarantee that future maps protect African American representation and communities of interest. The Council must submit this proposed redistricting plan to the Justice Department for comments; and
- If the Charter Revision Committee recommends a hybrid system of both at-large and district representatives, the Committee must recommend whether at-large members and district members will receive the same salary and have the same office budgets or different salaries and office budgets; and
- The Charter Revision Committee must recommend a transition plan for how the City Council will change from its current form of representation to the recommended form of representation, including, but not limited to, the following: (a) when current members would resign, (b) how the transition plan would affect the charter provisions relating to terms limits for the Mayor and Council; and (c) how the current staggered election system in the Charter would be amended; and
- The Charter Revision Committee must present specific recommendations for all other Charter amendments that would be required based on the Committee's recommended form of representation, redistricting plan and transition plan; and

- The Charter Revision Committee must recommend a specific proposal addressing whether campaign contributions will only be allowed from citizens who are residents of a particular district or whether contributions can be accepted from outside a particular geographic district and/or whether there will be any limits on out-of-district contributions.
- The African American Resource Advisory Committee (AARAC) must review and make recommendations on the Charter Revision Committee map, redistricting plan and transition plan. The AARAC's recommendations and comments must be included by the City in its submission to the Justice Department, and
- The City Manager must prepare a cost analysis detailing the cost to taxpayers of the proposed district system. The cost analysis should detail the cost of implementing the transition plan, including the cost of configuring City Hall and of relocating displaced city employees, as well as the increased cost, if any, of the new form of representation in the annual City budget and the cost of funding redistricting efforts. This cost analysis should be prepared upon receiving the Justice Department's comments on the submitted map and plan, and
- The Charter Revision Committee must recommend ballot language for any district system, map, redistricting plan and transition plan it recommends. This ballot language must include stating whether the City Council will be larger than the current form of representation, whether the proposed form of representation will cost more than the current system and how redistricting will be handled. The Charter

Revision Committee must also recommend ballot language for all other amendments to the City Charter that will be required to implement the Committee's recommended plan, including Charter amendments dealing with the current term limits and staggered election Charter provisions; and

- The above stated requirements must be completed and presented prior to the Council deadline to place any change in the form of representation on the November 2008 ballot.

ADOPTED: _____, 2008

ATTEST: _____
Shirley A Gentry
City Clerk