

Charter Review Commissions

Pinellas County Charter Review Commission
April 26, 2010

Charter Review Commissions

1. Why are CRC's important?
2. Practice in Pinellas County
3. Practice in other Charter Counties

Article VIII – Section 1

County charters adopted, amended or repealed *only* by vote of the electorate –

Counties.--

- (c) GOVERNMENT. Pursuant to general or special law, a county government may be established by charter which shall be adopted, amended or repealed only upon vote of the electors of the county in a special election called for that purpose.

Article VIII - Section 2

Municipal charters adopted, amended or repealed pursuant to general or special law, with or without voter approval -

Municipalities.--

- (a) ESTABLISHMENT. Municipalities may be established or abolished and their charters amended pursuant to general or special law. When any municipality is abolished, provision shall be made for the protection of its creditors.

Charter Review Commissions

- 20 charter counties
- 18 provide for regular review of county operations or county charter by entity other than BCC
- 16 authorize placement of amendments by review entity directly on ballot

Charter Review Commissions

- CRCs operate like constitutional review commissions
- Seek new ways to improve county operations and delivery of services via independent review of local constitution and county government

Pinellas CRC

“The charter review commission shall review, on behalf of citizens of Pinellas County, the operation of county government in order to recommend amendments to this charter, if any.”

Pinellas CRC

- 13 members appointed by BCC
 - four elected officials
 - nine public at-large, no elected officials
- Constituted every six years
- Six months to complete work
- No single subject rule
- No charter-embedded voting policies
- No public hearing requirements

CRC Practice Issues

Membership

Appointment Process

Frequency

Duration

Consulting/legal assistance

Single Subject Rule

Voting Policies

Public Hearings

CRC Practice Issues

Membership

- 13, 15 or some other number
- Pinellas requires certain elected officials
- Most specifically prohibit some or all elected officials/staff from serving

CRC Practice Issues

Appointment Process

- Most by BCC
- Adopt guidance concerning diversity in appointment process

CRC Practice Issues

Frequency

- Four, six, eight or 10 years?
- Eight allows amendments to appear on ballot during Presidential elections, when voter turnout typically higher

CRC Practice Issues

Duration

- Typically appointed “at least” 12 to 18 months prior to general election

CRC Practice Issues

Consulting/Legal Assistance

- Pinellas: “BCC shall provide staff assistance”
- Typically, CRCs authorized to retain counsel and outside consulting assistance

CRC Practice Issues

Single Subject Rule

- Typically not requirement for CRC or BCC-prepared amendments
- Single Subject rules common for Petitions

CRC Practice Issues

Voting Policies

- Pinellas: Silent, other than authority to adopt rules of operation
- Embed policy for extra-ordinary vote to adopt recommendations to ballot?

CRC Practice Issues

Public Hearings

- No requirement?
- Most require three hearings each separated by at least 10 but not more than 20 days

CRC Practice Issues

Power to propose...

- Amendments
- Revisions

CRC Practice Issues

Power to propose...

- Amendments
- Revisions
- Repeal
- Repeal/Replace