

MINUTES  
Charter Revision Commission  
December 8, 2005

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Arthur at 8:05 am. The Clerk called the roll and announced that a quorum was present.

Chairman Arthur announced that Rev. Michael Chapman has resigned from the Commission and County Executive Joel Giambra has appointed Mr. Conway Porter to take his place on the Commission. Commissioner Reese advised the Commission that he had filed a written response to Commissioner Greiner's letter with the letter. The purpose of Commissioner Reese's communication was to express his interest in land use management and urban sprawl and to encourage the Commission to have discussion on these issues. Commissioner Reese also announced that Mr. William Fulton will be giving a presentation on "Smart Growth is Business" at the Albright-Knox Art Gallery on December 8, 2005.

Commissioner Reese requested clarification of the Commissioners status in light of the recent changes to the composition of the Erie County Legislature. Chairman Arthur stated that the members of the Commission are appointed for a term and that incoming legislators do not have the authority or power to replace current Commissioners. Commissioner Lillis stated that she has contacted the new legislator from the 9<sup>th</sup> District to arrange to meet with her and she encouraged her fellow Commissioners to do the same if they have a new representative in their district. After discussion it was agreed that the Commission should go forward with the task that it was empowered by the Legislature by the Legislature to do. Mr. Rubin restated his opinion that Commissioners serve for the term for which they were appointed by the Legislature.

Chairman Arthur announced that he would like to meet with all committee chairs immediately after today's Commission meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss potential jurisdictional conflicts between committees raised by Commissioner Rath. Chairman Arthur suggested two possible solutions for resolving the potential conflicts: (1) joint committee meetings to address the subject or (2) establish subcommittees of the two committees to address the area of concern.

Commissioner Rath gave the report for the Form & Scope of Government Committee. The committee held its organizational meeting on December 1, 2005 and they are essentially in a fact-finding mode. The committee will be inviting area county managers in to discuss the pros and cons of that form of government. In addition, the committee will be reviewing the Alternatives to Mandates initiative which was approved by the State Legislature in 2004. The committee will meet every Thursday at 10:00 in the Committee Meeting Room.

Chairman Arthur announced that he has spoken to Mr. Steven J. Acquario, Executive Director of NYSAC and he has agreed to appear before the Commission to share an overview of what other local governments are doing. Chairman Arthur also introduced Professor John Lines who was involved in the City of Buffalo's Charter review process and who will be assisting the Commission.

Commissioner Magavern gave the report of the Administration and Legislation Committee. The committee is studying the idea of a county manager form of government with the county manager appointed by the County Executive. The manager would be a professional manager who would have wide latitude in running the operations of county government. Mr. Len Matarese will meet with the committee on Friday (12/9) to discuss this issue. Mr. Magavern also proposed that his committee should work with the Form & Scope of Government Committee on this issue. Other areas of concern for his committee are the size and composition of the Legislature, legislative salaries and District offices for legislators. The committee will also review the suggestions from the Buffalo/Niagara Partnership and focus on the development of a strategic planning process which will have a built-in system of accountability. The Committee will meet every Friday at 8:00 am.

Commissioner Kruly gave the report of the Fiscal Affairs Committee. The committee has met three times and is systematically identifying and reviewing every section of the charter and code which is relevant to fiscal matters. In addition, the committee is discussing more global ideas i.e., the creation of an independent budget office in the Legislature. The county's Budget Director and his staff have participated in these discussions and representatives from the Office of the Comptroller will be invited to participate as well. Mr. Kruly reported that each committee chair has been asked to identify the sections of the charter and code they believe are relevant to their committee's work. Four committees have reported that information and a spreadsheet has been prepared identifying each Chair's thoughts. Mr. Kruly pointed out that some sections of the Charter or code have not been identified by anyone and obviously the group needs to determine which committee will be responsible for those areas.