

Doug Weiss's Charter Amendment Assessment

Summary of Doug's Recommendations:

PROP. 1		No
PROP. 2	Yes	
PROP. 3		No
PROP. 4		No
PROP. 5	Yes	
PROP. 6	Yes	
PROP. 7	Yes	
PROP. 8	Yes	
PROP. 9	Yes	
PROP. 10		No
PROP. 11	Yes	
PROP. 12	Yes	
PROP. 13	Yes	
PROP. 14	Yes	
PROP. 15		No
PROP. 16	Yes	
PROP. 17	Yes	
PROP. 18	Yes	
PROP. 19		No
PROP. 20		No
PROP. 21		No
PROP. 22		No
PROP. 23		No
PROP. 24	Yes	
PROP. 25	Yes	
PROP. 26	Yes	
PROP. 27	Yes	
PROP. 28	Yes	

Doug Weiss's Charter Amendment Assessment

What it says	What it means	My Opinion
<p>PROP. 1, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to change the structure of the City Council from six to seven members, allow the Mayor to vote on all matters and remove the preparation of City Council agendas from the Mayor's rights and responsibilities?</p>	<p>This proposition does three things. First, it adds an additional council seat which would be filled by a subsequent election. Second, it provides the mayor a vote on every item, the same as any other council member. Finally, it removes the mayor's power to set the agenda for council meetings, and delegates that power to the city manager.</p>	<p>I believe the mayor needs to lead our city, and (s)he can't do that if (s)he has voted against an item that passed. When the mayor does vote now, in the event of a tie, the mayor always casts the deciding vote, so (s)he can lead the city on the issue. While I really like the idea of getting more people involved by adding a council seat, the problems with a mayor who votes overshadow that benefit.</p> <p>I recommend voting No.</p>
<p>PROP. 2, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to clarify that the Municipal Judge does not have to be a resident of the City?</p> <p>PROP. 3, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to require the Municipal Judge be a resident of the City?</p>	<p>Propositions 2 and 3 are opposing issues. If they both pass, then the one that receives the most votes will be enacted. If they both fail, then the current charter language, which is essentially the same as Prop. 2, remains in place. They are presented this way because the council did not agree with the item submitted by the charter review commission. Our current municipal judge is a resident of the city, but the charter does not currently mandate that (s)he be.</p>	<p>Certain top employees of the city should be required to live inside city limits because they need to be vested in the community. Our city manager is required to be a resident. However, I don't see a need to require our municipal judge, who is essentially a part-time employee, to reside inside city limits.</p> <p>I recommend Yes on 2 and No on 3. To make it easy, voting No on both will have the same effect.</p>
<p>PROP. 4, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to change the Parks and Recreation Commission to a project specific advisory board which reports to the City Manager and provide for a process to appoint seven regular board members?</p>	<p>This proposition essentially disbands the Parks and Recreation Commission by removing the term of appointment and turns it into an "as needed" advisory board. The board will be appointed on a project basis with limited oversight responsibilities.</p>	<p>In my opinion, the Parks & Recreation board should be composed of people with a wide, overarching view of our city's parks system. The idea behind this proposition is that the council could appoint a group of people all interested in smaller, more specific topics. While that may be a good idea for certain projects, I believe that type of input can be acquired through other means. We need a commission responsible for setting the direction of our entire parks system, rather than delegating it to staff.</p> <p>I recommend voting No.</p>
<p>PROP. 5, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to provide that an affirmative vote of a majority of the voting members of the city council shall be required to terminate a city manager?</p>	<p>The charter requires 4 of the 5 council members to vote to hire the city manager, but it doesn't mention anything about firing him. In theory, he could be fired by a vote of two council members at a meeting where only three of them show up.</p>	<p>This proposition requires a majority of the entire council, not just those present at the meeting, to vote to fire the city manager. This proposition requires 3 votes, or 4 votes if prop. 1 passes, to fire the city manager. That seems fair to me.</p> <p>I recommend voting Yes.</p>

Doug Weiss's Charter Amendment Assessment

<p>PROP. 6, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to provide that a violation of the prohibition to interfere with the Administration by a City Council member be grounds for removal from office?</p>	<p>While the city charter contains rules and requirements for council members, it doesn't include an enforcement provision. No consequences are spelled out in the charter. That is, like the Constitution of the United States, it lists the rights and responsibilities, but no punishments. These three propositions add punishments in the event that a councilperson violates the charter.</p>	<p>While I don't personally think the charter is the right place to include a specific enforcement provision, I don't have any objection to these items. These punishments make it clear that the citizens expect a certain level of service from our elected representatives.</p>
<p>PROP. 7, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to add as grounds for removal from office as a City Councilmember violation of the nepotism provision of the Charter?</p>		<p>While I'm less enthusiastic about these, I still recommend voting Yes on 6, 7, and 8.</p>
<p>PROP. 8, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to specify a hearing process and procedure for removal from office as a City Council member?</p>		
<p>PROP. 9, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to change the prohibition on holding other compensated appointive city office or employment to prohibit all other compensated and/or contracted services and extend the prohibition time period from one year to two years after the expiration of a term of office?</p>	<p>Currently, anyone who is elected to the council cannot be employed by the city in any capacity, and cannot be employed in an appointed position (head of a department or higher) for one year after they leave the council.</p> <p>This proposition is adding a restriction on doing any business with the city during that time, and extending the one-year restriction to a two-year restriction.</p> <p>For example, while serving on council, you couldn't also be a police officer, library assistant, or seasonal lifeguard with the city. After you leave the council, you could hold those jobs, but you couldn't head up the Public Works department or be hired as the Chief of Police until a year has passed, or two years, if this proposition passes.</p> <p>Another example, Let's say you own a business that does traffic studies or designs parks. Currently, you could bid on city contracts as much as you want. While it may appear improper for someone who sits on the council to win a contract for those services, it's not currently prohibited. This proposition prohibits any council member from working on any city contract for the duration of their term and two years afterwards.</p>	<p>This proposition seeks to reduce any conflicts of interest that may arise between the city, the citizens, and our elected officials. While this item does place additional restrictions on the individuals we elect, it does not seem to be an undue burden for someone who truly seeks to serve the citizens.</p> <p>I recommend voting Yes.</p>

Doug Weiss's Charter Amendment Assessment

<p>PROP. 10, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to change the requirement of how often it meets with boards and commissions from “at least once a year” to an “as needed basis”?</p>	<p>This one is pretty self-explanatory. All boards and commissions are required to meet with the council once per year. This proposition removes that requirement.</p>	<p>The current language allows the council to meet with each board or commission as often as they want, with a once-per-year minimum. This proposition only services to remove the minimum requirement. I don't believe it's wise to ignore a board or commission for more than a year.</p> <p>I recommend voting No.</p>
<p>PROP. 11, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to clarify its process whereby the City Council may approve an ordinance without the need to consider and vote to approve the ordinance at two separate meetings, as provided by the City Charter?</p>	<p>This proposition is really more of a clarification than a change. Some ordinances go into effect immediately after they're passed the first time, even though they do have to be read and passed a second time to remain in effect.</p>	<p>This was a problem when the council passed the no-parking changes for Pfluger Farm Lane. The city began enforcing it immediately after the first reading, but some people thought it wouldn't be effective until after the second reading.</p> <p>Since this is just a clarification, I recommend voting Yes.</p>
<p>PROP. 12, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to clarify that an emergency ordinance can be considered for adoption, amendment, and rejection at the same meeting?</p>	<p>This proposition literally changes the word “or” to “and” when listing the types of actions the council can take on an emergency ordinance.</p>	<p>The idea here is that the council may call a meeting and act on an emergency ordinance, but the need for that ordinance may change before they're even finished meeting. This proposition allowed them to adopt, amended, and rejected all at the same meeting. This really just cleans up some potentially ambiguous language in the charter.</p> <p>I recommend voting Yes.</p>
<p>PROP. 13, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to require the City Manager to become a resident of the city within 180 days after appointment?</p>	<p>This change puts a specific time limit on the city manager moving into the city after being hired. The charter currently allows the council to set a “reasonable” time limit.</p>	<p>This change will prevent the council from acquiescing to a city manager who is procrastinating for whatever reason. I do believe it's important for the city manager to reside in the city as soon as possible after being hired.</p> <p>I recommend voting Yes</p>
<p>PROP. 14, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to provide that Acting City Managers are appointed by the city manager rather than the City Council?</p>	<p>The “acting” city manager is the person assigned to perform the duties of the city manager while (s)he is sick, on vacation, or otherwise indisposed for a short period of time.</p>	<p>Some people confuse the “acting” city manager with the “interim” city manager, but an “interim” city manager must still be appointed by council.</p> <p>The city council shouldn't be required to pass a resolution each time the city manager goes on vacation.</p> <p>I recommend voting Yes.</p>

Doug Weiss's Charter Amendment Assessment

<p>PROP. 15, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to provide that the City Manager shall annually submit a five-year capital improvement plan to the city council at least one hundred and twenty days before the beginning of the budget year listing projects in order of preference and with a recommendation of the year of construction for each project?</p>	<p>Currently, the city manager is required to assist each board or commission in the preparation of the five-year plans on each of them must submit to council on the areas under their purview. This proposition requires the city manager to consolidate each individual plan into one overarching plan for all capital improvements.</p>	<p>Other propositions remove other boards or commissions requirement to submit individual plans, and this consolidates the plan under the city manager. Personally, I believe it's each boards' responsibility to prioritize their projects and the council's responsibility to integrate all priorities into a single plan. I don't like the idea of delegating that responsibility to staff.</p> <p>I recommend voting No.</p>
<p>PROP. 16, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to reduce the required number of petition signatures for initiatives, referendums and nonbinding referendums from 20% to 15% of qualified voters of the City?</p>	<p>These three propositions make petitions easier to manage while reducing the required number of signatures to force an item to an election.</p>	<p>I believe it's important to listen to the voice of the citizen. The number of signatures currently required is seemingly unobtainable. Anything that allows the citizens to actively participate is a good thing.</p> <p>I recommend voting Yes 16, 17, and 18.</p>
<p>PROP. 17, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to allow a signatory to a petition to provide their date of birth or their voter registration number?</p>		
<p>PROP. 18, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to extend the response time of the City Secretary to issue petition certificate copies from immediately to the next business day?</p>		
<p>PROP. 19, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to change the powers of the planning commission to include zoning proposals in its recommendations to City Council; to revise meeting requirements; and to include parks, transportation and utilities in its five year capital improvement plan?</p>	<p>This proposition allows the Planning and Zoning Commission to make recommendations to council outside of specific zoning cases. It also removes the requirement that the commission meet at least once per month. Finally, it adds some topics to the five-year capital improvement plan, one of which (parks) is removed from a different commission by an earlier proposition.</p>	<p>I believe the city needs to be willing and prepared to take action on any submitted plans in a timely matter. I don't like the idea of forcing an applicant to wait longer because there's no scheduled meeting this month.</p> <p>Also, I believe the Parks and Recreation Commission should retain control of their own capital improvement plan (removed by proposition 4).</p> <p>I recommend voting No on 19.</p>
<p>PROP. 20, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to reduce the number of alternates for the zoning board of adjustment from four to two?</p>	<p>The Board of Adjustment is one of the most powerful boards appointed by the city council. They have quasi-judicial powers and can make decisions that even the city council cannot change. That being the case, not many issues make it all the way to them. Staff and the city council are generally willing to reach a solution without the need to send a case in front of this board.</p>	<p>Like the previous proposition, I don't like the idea of reducing the meeting requirement for any board. I don't want staff to have any excuse to delay a hearing when someone has a case that should go before this board. Even though they had just one case to review in 2015 and one in 2012, meetings can always be cancelled if there's no business to conduct.</p> <p>I recommend voting No on 20 and 21.</p>
<p>PROP. 21, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to reduce the required number of meetings of the zoning board of adjustment from one each quarter to one annually?</p>		

Doug Weiss's Charter Amendment Assessment

<p>PROP. 22, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to require the City Manager to meet quarterly with the representatives of the police association regarding working conditions and compensation?</p>	<p>This proposition essentially requires the city manager to meet quarterly with representatives from the police officers' union, or whatever group represents the majority of our police officers.</p>	<p>While the idea of maintaining open communication with our police officers would be a good thing, this requirement seems too convoluted, requiring arbitration if there's a dispute over who actually represents the majority and charging the officers for the process of electing a representative. This proposition doesn't seem to actually achieve its goal.</p> <p>I recommend voting No on 22.</p>
<p>PROP. 23, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to change the Charter Review Commission to hold a minimum of six (6) and a maximum of eight (8) meetings, two (2) of which shall be held jointly with the City Council?</p>	<p>The Charter Review Commission is already required to hold a minimum of six meetings, and has the power to require the attendance of any city officer. All this adds is a requirement to meet jointly with the city council twice.</p>	<p>The city council seemed disappointed with some of the amendments proposed by the charter review commission, and this is an attempt to exert more control and direction over them in the future. However, council members each appoint representatives to this commission, so they should already be able to discuss issues with them. Council members are also free to attend every commission meeting.</p> <p>In my opinion, the city council needs to trust the people who they put in this position, and they need to allow the commission to operate independently while reviewing the charter. This seems like an overreach to me.</p> <p>I recommend voting No.</p>
<p>PROP. 24, Shall the City of Pflugerville strike portions of its Charter due to repetitiveness with Texas law regarding general powers of the city; eminent domain; zoning; actions which require an ordinance; and city elections?</p>	<p>These five propositions are simply cleaning up the charter to conform with state law.</p>	<p>I recommend voting Yes on 24, 25, 26, 27, and 28</p>
<p>PROP. 25, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to allow for annexation and disannexation consistent with Texas law?</p>		
<p>PROP. 26, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to provide a process for filling a vacancy on the City Council consistent with the Texas Constitution?</p>		
<p>PROP. 27, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to provide that the City Council determines by resolution the uniform election date for city elections instead of on a date closest to the second Saturday in May as allowed by Texas law?</p>		
<p>PROP. 28, Shall the City of Pflugerville amend its Charter to be consistent with Texas law as to who may request alternates to attend a zoning board of adjustment meeting?</p>		