

**CITY OF LINO LAKES  
CHARTER COMMISSION**

**DATE** : February 19, 1998  
**TIME STARTED** : 8:16 P.M.  
**TIME ENDED** : 9:34 P.M.  
**MEMBERS PRESENT** : Montain, DeMotts, Dunn, Bernier, Rehbine, Solfest,  
Corson, Sullivan, Lane, Trehus, Bening, Dahl, and  
Turner  
**MEMBERS ABSENT** : Aldentaler, Kenfield, and Zastrow  
**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT** : Finance Director Mary Vaske, Interim City  
Administrator Dave Pecchia, and City Engineer  
Dave Ahrens

**CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL**

Chair Montain called the special meeting of the Lino Lakes Charter Commission to order at 8:16 p.m. on January 19, 1998.

Chair Montain pointed out that copies of that portion of the minutes from the January 8, 1998 Charter Commission meeting containing Mary Vaske's comments were available.

**APPEARANCES**

Mr. DeMotts introduced Interim City Administrator Pecchia, City Council Member Lyden, and Mayor Sullivan.

Chair Montain expressed appreciation to the members of the City Council and Staff for taking the time to attend this meeting.

**ROAD RECONSTRUCTION**

**How Charter Worked, 1997** - Mayor Sullivan expressed her desire to know the Charter Commission's sentiments in this regard. Chair Montain explained that the Commission was very pleased and surprised with the overwhelming election turnout, and that the Charter had been effective. He added that there may be a need to simplify some of the wording of the Charter, but that no change is needed with regard to its meaning.

Mayor Sullivan asked if there were any extenuating circumstances present in this case resulting in success that might not be present in the event of future road issues. Chair Montain mentioned utilities as a clouding issue, he also indicated concern that additional education of the public might be necessary for them to fully understand the need for their endorsement of these projects.

Council Member Lyden expressed his view that the Charter has always been effective whether or not issues pass, and agreed that additional avenues may be appropriate.

Mayor Sullivan expressed her concern that with the Charter having been in existence for such a long time the City should have had some type of funding in place for reconstruction projects whether or not election issues pass. She indicated that the current City Council needs to address this funding issue, and that it would work with the Finance Department to seek a satisfactory solution.

**Future Plans, 1998 and Beyond** - Mr. Ahrens explained that in 1998 all roads on the east side of Reshanau Lake, and projects beyond that will have to be brought before the public.

Chair Montain asked if it is anticipated that the approved projects will be completed within 1998, to which Mr. Ahrens responded they should be.

Chair Montain asked if the City had been contacted by neighborhood residents following the election. Mr. Ahrens indicated that very few contacts had been made, and that everyone seemed happy with the results.

Commissioner Trehus asked about the impact of the \$1.7 million project on taxpayers. Mr. Ahrens was not prepared to produce figures, and Ms. Vaske added that the Financial Department is currently sorting through 1998 allocations.

Commissioner Trehus stated that the intent of the Charter is not to allow for use of City general fund money for road reconstruction without public approval. Chair Montain clarified that generally dedicated funds cannot be used in that manner.

Mayor Sullivan opined that the Charter does not prohibit such use. She added her interpretation that if the City can find funds that do not come from general fund tax dollars, it has the option to use such funds.

Chair Montain asked if reconstruction needs identified for the 1999 budget would become viable projects for the year 2000. Mayor Sullivan turned the question to Mr. Ahrens, asking when he foresaw the next phase of road reconstruction. Mr. Ahrens indicated that there is an immediate need, but that it takes approximately 1-1/2 years to implement a project following its inception. He added his recommendation that the City move immediately into the next phase.

Ms. Vaske explained the impact of a \$2 million bond as a \$29 increase in taxes for the owner of a \$100,000 home, \$43 for a \$150,000 home, and \$72 for a \$200,000 home. Mayor Sullivan made the general comment that the road reconstruction bond is not the only bond that will come before Lino Lakes. Therefore, there is a need to look not only at when road reconstruction is necessary but also at when funds will be available.

Commissioner Corson asked about the Park referendum, and Mayor Sullivan stated that this issue will come in the Spring. Mayor Sullivan reiterated the need to look at the overall picture, taking into account all of the City's needs and funds.

Council Member Lyden indicated that discussion about where the City goes from here is premature, suggesting that financial priorities must be determined.

Commissioner Dunn commented that the Charter worked. He added that the Charter Commission has no intention of acting to affect the general fund or road reconstruction. The Commission developed a five-year road improvement plan and, in Commissioner Dunn's opinion, it would be prudent for the City to establish a fund specifically for infrastructure--road repair. He added that it would be erroneous for this and future City Councils not to designate such funds, suggesting that it would be much easier to invoke the Charter if the funds already existed.

Commissioner Turner asked when the financial plan would be available. Mr. Pecchia indicated that Staff is in the process of gathering information for the second Council work session in March.

Commissioner Trehus asked if the Council is committed to the Park referendum. Council Member Lyden indicated that it is not known at this time whether or not the referendum will solidify. Mayor Sullivan agreed, stating the Council had given the "go ahead" to initiate the process; but that there is a land acquisition issue, and that all of the pieces must come together. Council Member Lyden added the need to review the financial implications as well.

Commissioner Rehbine asked if there had been money set aside for the athletic complex. Ms. Vaske explained that there was a bond issue including \$6 million for parks and the athletic complex. Mayor Sullivan clarified that the athletic complex represented an expenditure of approximately \$3.5 million. Chair Montain broke down the areas of expenditure as land, roughly \$1 million; improvements to the land, approximately \$1.5 million; community parks, approximately \$1 million; and, approximately \$1 million for trails. He added that Council must approve a bond issue for these expenditures for public approval in June.

Commissioner Rehbine expressed concern that the City is significantly behind on road reconstruction. Chair Montain responded that focus cannot go to one project; parks also need attention.

Commissioner Rehbine suggested that perhaps bond limits should be increased, adding that roads should be a higher priority than a new complex.

## **FIVE-YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVMENT PLAN (CIP)**

**Development and Use Of a Workable Five-Year CIP (Described in City Charter)** - Chair Montain explained that the five-year CIP is described in the City Charter. He added that there

had been communication to the previous Council, but that Ms. Vaske had been given this project at an awkward time. Chair Montain explained that at the January Charter Commission meeting Ms. Vaske suggested implementing the CIP at a more appropriate time, and asked if the present Council intends to follow through with this program.

Mayor Sullivan explained that Council has not yet conducted its goal setting session, adding that the intent is to bring City plans more in line with the Charter. She referred specifically to Section 704 of the Charter, which calls for a financial plan including all City funds, and that Staff is in the process of developing such a plan. Mayor Sullivan stated that the City needs a five-year, or “strategic” plan, setting goals for a five-year period for annual review. She stated that Council intends to work closely with Staff to implement such a plan this year, taking into account Charter guidelines and the overall needs of the City.

Chair Montain pointed out that at its January meeting the Commission voted to bypass 1998 and begin in earnest to develop and implement a five-year CIP in 1999.

Mr. Pecchia explained that the Police Department developed a five-year CIP, and that even though very little was implemented during the first year the Department was able to extend the plan and certainly had a basis for achieving its goals.

Council Member Lyden echoed commitment to implementation of a five-year plan, but emphasized the importance of such a plan being relevant as an accurate, working planning tool.

Chair Montain expressed regret that this matter had not been effectively pursued in the past, acknowledging that a productive plan would require ongoing cooperation between the Charter Commission and City Council. He explained that the action taken at the January Commission meeting to bypass 1998 represents the Commission’s intent to give this matter proper thought and preparation.

Commissioner Turner asked if a starting point exists, and Mayor Sullivan suggested the budget as a basis for fund allocation. She added that the Charter Commission’s five-year CIP must be tied to the overall strategic plan for the City, which would include such critical components as the 2020 Vision and the Comprehensive Plan.

Commissioner Corson suggested that the Commission could benefit from Council’s finalized goals for the City in the development of its five-year CIP.

Chair Montain concluded that it is Council’s goal to develop and implement a five-year CIP. Ms. Vaske suggested that a new, separate five-year CIP might be incorporated into the budget book. Such a plan would require less detail and would allow for a certificate of performance as well as a certificate for the budget. Ms. Vaske suggested that during the budget process Council and the Commission could work together to ensure that all goals are included, possibly through budget sessions including committees representing various interests.

Chair Montain expressed concern that such a cooperative effort might not meet the criteria of the Charter mandate. Mayor Sullivan suggested that Ms. Vaske's recommendation would not be in conflict with the Charter.

Commissioner Dunn suggested that if a cooperative effort such as the one suggested by Ms. Vaske turns out to be more efficient and desirable but does not coincide with the Charter, perhaps the Charter should be amended. Chair Montain reminded Commissioner Dunn that recently the Charter was proven to work.

Council Member Lyden stated that the five-year CIP is not an option, and that Council will comply.

## COMMUNICATION

**Establish a Better Line of Communication Between Charter Commission and City Council; i.e., Annual Meetings, Quarterly Letter, or workshop Attendance** - Chair Montain explained that in 1997 there was a joint meeting between the Charter Commission and City Council. He also stated that Council Member Bergeson expressed his feeling that there was a lack of trust between the two groups. Chair Montain explained that trust can be enhanced through a good line of communication, indicating that the Commission would like to establish this possibly through a regularly-scheduled joint annual meeting, a quarterly newsletter, sharing of minutes, or joint work sessions.

Council Member Lyden suggested work sessions.

Mayor Sullivan agreed, adding the importance of coming to a work session with specific items for discussion. She added that Council would like to hear from the Commission at least annually, specifically with regard to the City's compliance with the Charter.

Council Member Lyden stated that the five-year CIP and road reconstruction issues indicate a need to meet more frequently.

Commissioner Turner suggested that it would be helpful for a Commission member to attend a Council work session prior to each quarterly Commission meeting, other than Caroline Dahl. Chair Montain added that according to the Charter a liaison cannot vote; therefore, Ms. Dahl could not participate in official action as a representative of the Commission.

Commissioner Turner suggested that the Commission representative would not have to be the same person each time, and that perhaps an appropriate agenda item could be added. Mayor Sullivan explained that there is a process by which to be added to a Council work session agenda.

Chair Montain concluded that there might continue to be annual joint meetings, and it was agreed that April would be a good time in order to incorporate budget and road reconstruction issues.

Mayor Sullivan added that the Commission should not hesitate to approach Council at any time, should the need arise.

Commissioner Dunn asked when Council might have a strategic plan available to the Commission. Mayor Sullivan suggested that by the end of the third quarter a working plan should be in place. Ms. Vaske added that September 15 should be the budget goal, and between that date and the end of the year goals for the next five years could be fixed and incorporated financially. She also pointed out that the community feels more secure if the budget is set by the time tax notices go out.

Mayor Sullivan pointed out that this first year will be trial-and-error. She added that as citizen-oriented budgeting is implemented, as individuals and as a group the Commission will become more aware of areas of interest and concern, and become more involved earlier in the process.

Chair Montain suggested the inclusion of a draft Commission five-year CIP on the October Council agenda.

Commissioner Trehus asked about representation from the Commission on the Comprehensive Task Force, requesting an opinion from Staff and from Council for evaluation at the Commission's April meeting.

Commissioner Corson requested that the budget review process as outlined in the Charter be placed on the next meeting agenda.

Commissioner Turner asked for Council opinion regarding changing Charter language. Council Member Lyden suggested extreme caution. Mayor Sullivan agreed.

Commissioner Dunn mentioned that at one time there was discussion regarding expanding the Task Force membership, and that perhaps that issue should be revisited. Mayor Sullivan pointed out the importance of keeping that group down to a manageable number.

Ms. Vaske pointed out that there is certain terminology within the Charter which is outdated and should be changed, such as reference to the City Clerk having responsibility for financial matters which is no longer accurate. Mayor Sullivan pointed out that the intent of the Charter in this regard is to maintain City Clerk and Treasurer duties within City Hall. Chair Montain explained that the Charter can be changed either by public vote, or by a combined 2/3 vote of the Charter and 4/5 of Council.

Mayor Sullivan thanked the Charter Commission for initiating this joint meeting and for being open to Council input. She also thanked Staff for attending.

Chair Montain also expressed appreciation for Council and Staff attendance and input.

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Continued communication between Council and the Commission was encouraged by all in attendance.

**ADJOURN**

MOTION by Commissioner Trehus, seconded by Commissioner Turner, to adjourn the meeting at 9:34 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Pope  
Recording Secretary  
*TimeSaver Off-Site Secretarial, Inc.*