

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION MEETING

Tuesday, March 15, 2022

1 PARTICIPANTS:

2 Charter Review Commission:

3 FRED EVANS

4 JOHN BECKER

5 DAVE GOTTESMAN

6 HAROLD HODGES

7 JACK KELLY

8 KEVIN OWEN

9 ANITA POWELL

10 SALLY KRAM

11 IZOLA SHAW

12 MARISSA VALERI

13 ROBERT WRIGHT

14 ROBERT KURNICK (Ex-Officio)

15 Staff:

16 CYNTHIA WALTERS, Deputy City Attorney

17 DANNY WINBORNE, Deputy City Clerk

18 SARA TAYLOR-FERRELL, City Clerk/Director  
19 of Council Operations

20 MELISSA WIAK, Management Assistant

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## 1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Okay, I'm going to  
3 read this. I'm going to read the disclaimer.  
4 Okay.

5 Good evening, everyone and welcome to  
6 the Charter Review Commission Town Hall. Tonight's  
7 town hall is being recorded as per the Open  
8 Meetings Act. Before we begin, here are some  
9 important guidelines for this town hall. Members  
10 of the Charter Review Commission will be the only  
11 participants allowed to have their cameras on  
12 during the town hall. All other participants'  
13 cameras should remain off during the town hall.  
14 Those who wish to speak should use the raise hand  
15 function and wait to be acknowledged by the  
16 Rockville staff town hall facilitator. Once you're  
17 called on to speak, you may unmute your mike.  
18 Speakers will have three minutes total and will be  
19 notified when your time is expired. Once you are  
20 done speaking, you may continue to listen to the  
21 town hall meeting. Please keep your microphones  
22 muted so that other speakers can be heard and to

1 avoid audio feedback. Thank you for joining us for  
2 this important town hall which will begin  
3 momentarily.

4 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Hello everyone. My  
5 name is Sara Taylor-Ferrell. I am the city's  
6 current Director of the Council of Operations here  
7 for the city of Rockville and I'm also the staff  
8 liaison for the Charter Review Commission.  
9 Tonight, we're here to hear the input from our  
10 participants who are joining us at this town hall  
11 this evening, and I will introduce you now to our  
12 Chair of the Commission which is Mr. Fred Evans.  
13 Thank you and Fred--

14 MR. EVANS: Thank you Sara. Good  
15 evening. I'm Fred Evans as she said, the Chair of  
16 the Rockville Charter Review Commission. The  
17 commissioners and I welcome you to this virtual  
18 town hall. We greatly appreciate your  
19 participation and look forward to hearing your  
20 points of view about how we can make Rockville an  
21 even greater place to live. Your feedback is very  
22 important.

1           First, I would like to introduce the  
2 Commission members and then get started. Cal  
3 Pungess (phonetic), wave. Jack Kelly, Sally Kram,  
4 Kevin Owen, Anita Neil-Powell, Izola Shaw, Marissa  
5 Valeri and Robert Wright. Hopefully John Beckham  
6 will be joining us also. I would also like to  
7 introduce Robert Kurnick, he's an ex officio  
8 member of the Commission as board of supervisor  
9 for this election's chair.

10           The mayor and council established the  
11 2020 Charter Review Commission on February 24th,  
12 2020 to review and make recommendations to the  
13 mayor and council regarding the charter of the  
14 city of Rockville. A copy of the Charter is  
15 located on the Rockville city website. The mayor  
16 and council resolution 9-20 established the scope  
17 of the work and topics to review which can be  
18 found on the Charter Review's web page. For the  
19 purpose of this town hall, we will focus on  
20 election related topics to include but not limited  
21 to increasing voter turn- out, engaging our  
22 diverse community and updating city charter,

1 pardon me, city code and charter. During this town  
2 hall meeting, there's a link question there for  
3 feedback. The link is located in the chat area to  
4 the bottom right-hand corner of the screen. If you  
5 answer the question there during tonight's  
6 session, your answers will be acknowledged. But if  
7 you answer them from the web page, it will not.  
8 All comments will be taken into consideration as  
9 we finalize our recommendations to the mayor and  
10 council. Thanks again and we will open the floor  
11 for your input. Thank you.

12 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: I am question --  
13 Danny or Michael, do we have any -- I see there  
14 were two attendees earlier. Can we push them  
15 through to speak?

16 DANNY: Alright, let me check that real  
17 quickly for you. I'm looking now. Alright, Scott  
18 Moore?

19 MR. MOORE: Hello.

20 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Alright, let's go.

21 MR. MOORE: Sorry. Hello, I'm still  
22 relatively a new resident to Rockville. I live

1 just across from Merrillville High School and I'm  
2 personally very partial to the idea that adding a  
3 district lines to the city. Now, I'm not in favor  
4 of it being only by district but rather a hybrid  
5 system. In my experience that usually helps with  
6 representation of different communities within a  
7 city while also allowing for a wider city voice to  
8 be heard. That's just my personal idea and  
9 preference, but obviously I'll leave it to you all  
10 to figure that out in the end.

11 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Alright, thank you  
12 Scott. The next person is Eric Fulton.

13 MR. FULTON: Good evening and thank you  
14 for the opportunity. I don't have prepared remarks  
15 I'm just kind of going off the questions I'm  
16 looking at in the chat. I've lived in Rockville  
17 for about 12 years, I currently live in the west  
18 end. I've lived in a couple other neighborhoods.

19 My general thoughts on all issues  
20 related to voting, I do favor as the previous  
21 speaker did an increase in overall representation.  
22 The city's boundaries and population have

1 increased significantly and the members of the  
2 mayor council have not in recent years even though  
3 their terms have increased in time. I am  
4 personally ambivalent on districting, but I know  
5 that there is a call for it in the city in many  
6 district parts. So, I think there is some benefits  
7 to it. My thoughts on drawing districting lines  
8 and where I have concerns is because we have not  
9 had districts drawn to this point, there are  
10 existing HOAs, associations, factions within this  
11 city that if district lines were drawn to include  
12 all of them, I worry about a concentration of  
13 power in certain segments of the city. I would  
14 want to take a long look at how these lines are  
15 drawn and make sure that is an open and  
16 transparent process to make sure that we're not  
17 artificially inflating the importance of just a  
18 minor amount of people in this city because the  
19 goal is to increase representation through all  
20 parts of the city.

21 Earlier I took a survey indicating this  
22 and I would like the opportunity to say it out

1 loud again. There was a question on the table of  
2 do we think that expanding the number of council  
3 members or redistricting will increase the chances  
4 and diverse outreach. I think it will to a degree,  
5 but I think the answer to all of these questions  
6 is money. I think people are limited more by the  
7 availability of time and funds then they are by  
8 the color of their skin, or their ethnic  
9 background or even where they live in the city.  
10 Until we find a way to level the playing field  
11 socio-economically, I think it will be hard press  
12 for us to make a real dent into how we claim to  
13 increase diversity among people. It takes a lot of  
14 time. It takes a lot of money to run and to serve.  
15 So those are my early thoughts on that. Thank you  
16 for this opportunity.

17 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you. Okay,  
18 the next speaker is Joe Gillespie.

19 SPEAKER: Joe? It's your turn.

20 MR. GILLESPIE: Okay, great. Yes so I  
21 also don't have really any prepared (inaudible)  
22 kind of short. I took the survey last week and I

1 sent in an email with some additional thoughts.  
2 You know, one of the things that I don't think  
3 looks fully explored in the questions in the  
4 survey, I think was the use of something like a  
5 single transferable voter's system. I think using  
6 that would avoid a lot of increase representation  
7 so people feel like they have someone who  
8 represents their views on the council. Well at the  
9 same time avoiding all the challenges and  
10 potential pitfalls you know, that were raised by  
11 the last speaker for example, member districts and  
12 where to draw those districts and how to do that.  
13 So, I would really strongly urge that this body  
14 take a look at some of the work associated with  
15 that, see how other cities and even other larger  
16 bodies have adopted, you know, voting systems like  
17 that. Hopefully that would be an effective method  
18 of allowing people to feel heard, feel like they  
19 are part of the process, that they have someone  
20 that represents them and hopefully increase voter  
21 turn-out and fairness at the same time without  
22 significant additional expense.

1 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you, Joe.

2 Next, we have Randy Ulton. Randy?

3 MR. ULTON: Can we speak? Can you hear  
4 me?

5 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Yes, we can hear  
6 you.

7 MR. ULTON: I'm a definite supporter of  
8 districts for this city. I vouched before the  
9 resolution a few years back about district wide  
10 representation. I look for a city that addresses  
11 our city's demographics and that is something that  
12 I've yearned for in my lifetime. I also think that  
13 this is so important for our diversity. I don't  
14 think that we have reached that. We've made gains  
15 over the years but we have yet to reach that  
16 pentacle where we've achieved that part of it. I  
17 also think that we have an economic sustainability  
18 issue with our city when we leave a lot of these  
19 other participants out. I remember Counselor -- a  
20 former council member of the Virginia (inaudible)  
21 resolution. It was a two to two resolution vote  
22 that failed to go forward. Within her resolution,

1 she identified the importance that we look at the  
2 stakeholders and their contributions that they can  
3 make. When we problem solve in this city,  
4 currently we have all five council members are  
5 from the one cluster: Richmond or Montgomery.  
6 Being a former school teacher, I'm an advocate for  
7 education but at the same time, we also have  
8 Rockville High School, we have Newton High School,  
9 we have Gaithersburg High School and we also have  
10 parts of the Walter Johnson cluster. We need  
11 those individuals to be members of this council.  
12 We need that representation in order for the city  
13 together to gather as a whole. Right now, I see  
14 that it is so easily to be a divided city where I  
15 look for ways that we can come together as one. I  
16 see the economics' impact when we try to look at  
17 Town Center and I will be hard press to tell you  
18 that I think that the representation for and from  
19 the people and folks of Richmond- Montgomery at  
20 are -- I want a 100 percent support. But I'm a  
21 Woodmont cluster at Walter Johnson former odd  
22 person. I actually live in the Woodmont cluster. I

1 can tell you that things happen out there that  
2 people really don't understand but that's why that  
3 representation is so important and so needed. I  
4 think we're missing this diversity and I do  
5 applaud that -- when I look at the wall in the  
6 city and I see 150 years, I'm privileged -- I feel  
7 proud that we've broken through where we have  
8 diversity where women are serving as mayor and on  
9 the council in that fashion. But when you go back  
10 and look at the history of our city, that wasn't  
11 always the case. It's important that we bring  
12 forward the richness that we have and our ability  
13 to bring forward that diversity. I acknowledge the  
14 gains but they are far too short for me and I  
15 really implore you to look at this from the  
16 diversity and the richness that we've still yet to  
17 bring to the table. The importance to bring  
18 forward all five clusters and I know some of you  
19 are educators yourself who would never run student  
20 council where we didn't include and where we  
21 weren't bringing forward everybody that we could  
22 possibly can and that's only going to be

1 accomplished by going with a seven member  
2 Rockville city council.

3 I also would say that our four years--  
4 we also just left our four year and moved to the  
5 four years terms. We had two years terms maybe we  
6 could manage better about bringing forward change.  
7 But now with four years, we have eight years going  
8 on soon where we would have this representation  
9 issue. If we don't address this representation it  
10 is going to cost the city. I know that all of us I  
11 think have the passion to want to do the right  
12 thing or to try to improve this city as the chair  
13 Fred Evans said, I want 100 percent on board. But  
14 I think we have to bring everybody and we're  
15 better together than we are separately.

16 So, in conclusion, I advocate for the  
17 district form of government where representation  
18 is addressed and we look for all the opportunities  
19 by which we can bring forward that richness of the  
20 diversity whether it be geographical, our school  
21 clusters, by race, by gender and any means that we  
22 possibly can. Because right now, and I looked at

1 the Maryland general assembly, there's a bill that  
2 was pending last year I'm sure is on the floor  
3 right now by the speaker about at large voting. My  
4 question to you all is why would we want to stay  
5 with at large? Why would we want to do that? I  
6 believe that district government brings  
7 opportunity for groups that are not always  
8 represented. I thank you for this time to speak  
9 that and I applaud all your efforts to try to  
10 address this problem but it has many different  
11 levels and many different aspects by which we are  
12 impacted as a city so, thank you.

13 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Randy? At this  
14 point, I don't see any more hands. If you wish to  
15 speak, please use the raise hand feature and we  
16 will certainly accommodate your comments. Okay,  
17 Claire Funkhauser (phonetic). Go ahead Claire.

18 MS. FUNKHAUSER: Good evening, thank you  
19 for letting me speak. One question that I have  
20 before I begin and that is, how many-- the  
21 percentage of voters in the last election? I  
22 believe I saw 70 percent at one point? Is that

1 correct?

2 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Robert you want to  
3 take that question as the chair?

4 MR. WRIGHT: I can tell you that -- Can  
5 you hear me now?

6 MS. FUNKHAUSER: Yes.

7 MR. WRIGHT: Okay. In the last election,  
8 the number -- the percentage of registered voters  
9 who voted was a 31 point something and I've  
10 forgotten the exact number so, maybe 68.9 percent  
11 of registered voters did not vote in the last--

12 MS. FUNKHAUSER: Oh, okay. So, that may  
13 have been a misprint or misunderstanding on my  
14 part because even 31% -- getting a lot of  
15 feedback, I hope you're not getting feedback from  
16 me -- but even 31% was considerably larger and I  
17 would attribute to the mail-in voting which seemed  
18 to be very successful.

19 I do want to go back to talk about the  
20 number of council members and also the idea of  
21 district voting. This is just the perspective of  
22 somebody who was in Clark's office for 12 years

1 and worked with lots of council members and  
2 several mayors. I'm not sure we need many more  
3 council members. Seven would be okay, I think five  
4 is sufficient for a city of our size. I hear  
5 people say we've grown tremendously in size. We  
6 really have not. The population of Rockville when  
7 I was working in this city was about in the  
8 sixties like it is now. We also have an  
9 (inaudible) of boundaries tremendously you know,  
10 since Fallsborough (phonetic). So, I think that  
11 there's some-- a common misperceptions for that.  
12 So, I think seven-member council members would be  
13 okay, but I think five is sufficient.

14 I differ somewhat from Mr. Ulton for  
15 example on the idea of districts versus at large  
16 council members. It distressed me when I was the  
17 city clerk that there were more than a few council  
18 members and a couple of mayors who really weren't  
19 knowledgeable about the city as a whole. Some of  
20 them had never been to certain areas of the city  
21 unless they were looking for votes for their  
22 elections. They did not have a knowledge of this

1 city as a whole. I think that is something every  
2 council member and certainly every mayor has to  
3 have. I fear that if we would have district  
4 representation the concentration would be on  
5 knowing your district and not knowing this city.  
6 So that is the prism I have about turning into  
7 districts. Let alone the nightmare of trying to  
8 figure out how this would be appropriated. That  
9 would be a tremendous job that would probably take  
10 at least two years on the part of the board of  
11 elections to even submit something to the mayor  
12 and council. I also, back to the number of council  
13 members you would need to (inaudible) up the  
14 staff, the clerks' office, keeping up with the  
15 mayor and four council members is a full-time  
16 job. If you add extra council members that would  
17 be even greater. One more point about a larger  
18 number of council members. You may have an  
19 inclination upon the mayor and council to begin to  
20 think about breaking up into committees. Similar  
21 to how the county council is, just to handle the  
22 work. So, you know, that's something to consider.

1 So those are the things I can think of right now.  
2 I'm sure there will be others and I open ended  
3 question.

4 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you Ms.  
5 Funkhauser. Okay next we have Miss Rudolph.

6 MS. RUDOLPH: -- the representation so I  
7 would support districts. I suggest the districts  
8 be based on planning areas to make sure that all  
9 areas of the city are equally represented. But I  
10 also think that a huge factor is that the city's  
11 outreach and community engagement approach  
12 including announcing this meeting is based on the  
13 assumption that people live in single homes and  
14 typically in neighborhoods that are represented by  
15 organized home owners' associations or community  
16 associations. There is a huge demographic of  
17 renters in this city who the city's outreach  
18 approach now does not engage. It turns out that  
19 many times when they're planning meetings, they  
20 require no notification and inclusion of people  
21 who live within a certain geographic area. The  
22 individual tenants and residents of multi-family

1 rental buildings are not being contacted. So, the  
2 whole process of community engagement is  
3 underrepresenting what now the latest housing  
4 demographic. The city has just published its data  
5 based on the 2020 census. Nearly half of residents  
6 in this city are in multi-family rental buildings.  
7 We are not reaching out to them and we certainly  
8 are not represented on the council. Thank you.

9 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you Ms.  
10 Rudolph. The next person is Miss Savoss  
11 (phonetic).

12 MS. SAVOSS: Hi, thank you. So, I wanted  
13 to talk about approval voting and my support for  
14 approval voting. And by approval voting I mean  
15 allowing voters to vote for as many candidates as  
16 they want. So, right now we have four slots for  
17 the mayor-- four slots for the council and so  
18 voters can only vote for four candidates and one  
19 slot for the mayor. So, voters can only vote for  
20 one mayor. This is fine if there's to say only  
21 five candidates in the race or two mayors in the  
22 race, or two mayor candidates in the race, but

1 increasingly the field is getting much more  
2 crowded and that leads to situations where voters  
3 might have for example in this situation of the  
4 council, they might have two slates of candidates  
5 who they would be fine with and a third slate or a  
6 third individual candidate that they would be  
7 horrified to have elected. Maybe everyone in the  
8 city agrees or kind of okay with two, with two of  
9 the slates but really don't want the third one. Or  
10 you have a situation where you have maybe three  
11 slates of candidates and one individual candidate  
12 who is advocating voting for themselves among  
13 their supporters and that candidate may win  
14 because the field is so divided. So, I strongly  
15 support approval voting and allowing people to  
16 just vote for more than four candidates. It still  
17 gives everybody an equal chance at voting. They  
18 can decide to spread their voices or spread out  
19 their vote more or concentrate it more on the  
20 candidates they like.

21           The one thing I'll add to that is  
22 there's been a lot of discussion of rate choice

1 voting as a solution to this problem and the  
2 reason that I support approval voting over rate  
3 choice voting is first of all that there's fewer  
4 spoiled ballots. So, we with rate choice voting  
5 you have a lot of voters that don't quite  
6 understand, not a large percentage in total of  
7 approval rating, but of those who don't understand  
8 the rules and their ballots might be spoiled.  
9 Another reason is that there is more than one way  
10 to effectively grade approval voting or whatever  
11 you may want to call it, sorry I mean choice  
12 voting, there's more than one way to determine the  
13 winner. You could do instant run-off, you could  
14 do-- there's other forms. It's really kind of  
15 confusing to voters and so, I think approval  
16 voting is this really elegant solution where  
17 people who want to just vote for four candidates  
18 for council, for one candidate mayor can  
19 absolutely go ahead. But people whose priority is  
20 to for example not see certain candidates in  
21 office can choose to spread their voice out more.  
22 I think it's really really important especially as

1 fields get more crowded, especially as candidates  
2 get more radical frankly, that we give voters this  
3 choice. It leads to better elections with outcomes  
4 that are more preferred by more voters. Thank you  
5 very much for your time.

6 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you. Next, we  
7 have Mr. Ulton.

8 MR. ULTON: Yes. I appreciate that  
9 opportunity and the comments made. I look at this  
10 as a math problem. Some of the HOAs and the  
11 communities, they have a large number of votes  
12 from their-- that they represent. It's very hard  
13 for smaller communities to come ahead and address  
14 some of the mathematical problems of a vote to be  
15 a winner in an election. That's really what we  
16 have at hand. We have great council members and  
17 mayors. But the point of it is that we would  
18 really have a hard time mathematically bringing in  
19 other groups of representatives from other diverse  
20 populations which is something we need to do. We  
21 have to have a city or we should have a city that  
22 represents our city's demographics. And this

1 voting where we have one -- I use the example the  
2 one cluster. Having all five members from one  
3 school cluster is not helping our city's other  
4 initiatives. It mathematically hurts. We have  
5 Rockville cluster for example. That cluster is  
6 8/10th part of the city and it's had one mayor  
7 Marchuccio and it's had Julio Carr who is now a  
8 delegate. But we really do need to look at how we  
9 are getting through the math of an election.  
10 Getting that addressed where an individual can  
11 mount a campaign that is you know, from a  
12 different point of the city that would bring  
13 something to the table to help problem solve some  
14 of the concerns. I don't see any other way than by  
15 district.

16 I would encourage the commission to do  
17 this. I've done this. I've done a chart, a  
18 spreadsheet on where are we getting our most  
19 number of representatives from? We're not getting  
20 them from all corners of the city. We're getting  
21 them specific areas consistently. If you look at  
22 the last 20 years and why would that be? Why would

1 that be something where we only would poll, where  
2 only certain parts of the city can bring forward  
3 candidates and winners in an election? We lose so  
4 much by doing that part that we miss some of the  
5 pieces that these other folks would bring in to  
6 the city. Again, it is a math problem where a  
7 small HOA made up of 700 homes, how would it  
8 compete against a 7000 home-owner HOA? You can't.  
9 Whenever that aspect of it happens, where a lot of  
10 the information, the needs, the attention and I  
11 think the engagement. One individual spoke about  
12 the renters not being part of the city. We have  
13 got to bring everybody to the city. We have  
14 tremendous problems since COVID, we have many  
15 unknowns but it's going to have to have to require  
16 all of us to solve these problems. I really  
17 prefer, I'm really an advocate to reaching out to  
18 the corners of this city, those groups that have  
19 never been tapped into and bringing them forward  
20 in the district type of government. I don't think  
21 we just need to rely on one group or one part of  
22 the city to consistently bring forward that part.

1           If you do that spreadsheet, you might  
2 just find yourself shocked at where are the  
3 candidates coming from that are successful? And  
4 why are they successful? Because they have 5000  
5 homes or renters or apartments or condominiums.  
6 That is very hard say someone who is a candidate  
7 coming forward saying from a 300. How does that  
8 work? I mean how does that work? How in the world  
9 could that happen where that candidate can be  
10 successful? How would we ever turn that page?  
11 We've turned this page and we've done a lot with  
12 this part but we still have to keep working to be  
13 a more diverse city in that aspect. So, if you  
14 look at the math, you see where the candidates are  
15 coming from and you see that it doesn't mean that  
16 we want to go beyond where we are. That would be  
17 something that I think would help the commission,  
18 the Charter Commission when they made their  
19 presentation to the mayor council and just say  
20 this is the X number of candidates, this is the  
21 clusters that they represent, these are the  
22 communities they come from. Is this the city that

1 we want? If that's what it is then that's what it  
2 is, but it is pretty much a concrete number and  
3 it's a data driven answer. Thank you so much.

4 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you. Okay  
5 Vincent Russo.

6 MR. RUSSO: I received the questionnaire  
7 that you sent to the other members of the  
8 community or something along those lines and I  
9 sent it back. So, I won't go over all those  
10 answers but I'm generally in support of adding two  
11 council members and certainly open to district  
12 seats as well or even something like the model  
13 that the county has with a mix of at large and  
14 district seats to provide you know, a balance  
15 between the local attention and concern and  
16 representation and also have members on the body  
17 who have the whole city as a perspective. I'm  
18 somewhat skeptical that it's going to resolve in  
19 great achievements in terms of representation and  
20 diversity and all that. But I mean it's a chance.  
21 It provides more opportunity for it but I would  
22 just caution against raising expectations a little

1 bit too much about what adding districts and  
2 additional council members will achieve.

3           What other point that I thought was  
4 really important in your questions and in the work  
5 that you have been doing is the independence of  
6 the board of supervisors of elections. I think,  
7 you know, particularly with everything that's  
8 going on as a backdrop in the country, I think  
9 these are treasures that we have in the board of  
10 supervisors of elections. I think in practice and  
11 in appearance too. I think we need to be very  
12 sensitive to the appearance of their independence  
13 and give them the space to do that. So, I'd urge  
14 you to consider that in your deliberations.

15           There was also a question about the  
16 appointment process for the board of supervisors  
17 of elections, appointments and reappointments and  
18 I wasn't sure exactly what the questions were  
19 getting at there, but one thing I'd urge the  
20 commission to look at is the practice of  
21 commissioners serving on commissions, particularly  
22 the quasi-official ones where they have expired

1 terms. They're serving long past their term in  
2 some cases and I don't know what the Charter says  
3 about that, but I do think that's something the  
4 Charter Review should look at and whether or not  
5 there should be some provision there for actually  
6 ending the commissioners' service when their term  
7 expires. So, I think that's something to consider.  
8 Your charge for the mayor and council included a  
9 lot of other things in addition to elections and  
10 the number of council seats. In particular there  
11 were a couple related to the board of authority to  
12 appoint a board of health or to establish  
13 quarantine regulations. I guess I would be very  
14 cautious here about that too. I wouldn't support  
15 that because I think one of the things that we  
16 learned from this pandemic is that when you --  
17 people can be very easily confused when you're  
18 hearing multiple messages from different levels of  
19 government. I think that if we add one at the  
20 municipal level then that could really not add  
21 much value when we contribute already through our  
22 county taxes to those services being provided by

1 the county. From the county level we also have the  
2 state officials weighting in on these things as  
3 well, so I just don't really see a role there for  
4 the city of Rockville. So, I would not support  
5 changing the charter for those. I don't know if  
6 that's anything that you've looked at in your  
7 deliberations because everything so far has been  
8 about these other topics but I did want to mention  
9 that. I think that's all. Thank you.

10 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you very  
11 much. There is one call-in user here and I am not  
12 sure that that call-in user has an opportunity to  
13 raise his hands. So, what I'd like to do is call  
14 in user number four. It's a 202 prefix. Now I'm  
15 not going to give the number just the 202 prefix.  
16 I'm going to turn to Michael to see if there is  
17 something you'd like to say.

18 MICHAEL: --coming through--

19 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Yes, okay, well,  
20 there are no other hands. We do remind you that if  
21 you'd like to speak, if you could raise your hand.  
22 Use the raise hand function, we will gladly

1 entertain your comments. Alright, Ms. Wolarsky,  
2 please go.

3 MS. WOLARSKY: Thank you so much for the  
4 opportunity and thank you for convening this  
5 meeting. I think it's important to be able to  
6 discuss this range of issues in an open forum. I  
7 wanted to comment on a couple of things.

8 One is the expansion of voting rights to  
9 new groups and just based on the survey that was  
10 done here as part of the town hall, it was not  
11 very clear what specific new groups are included  
12 in the questions. So, as a comment for you know,  
13 for future analysis please include the details. It  
14 was just very hard to figure out what exactly is  
15 meant.

16 My second comment is on scheduling  
17 elections to coincide with the federal elections.  
18 I think it's a really bad idea. The municipal  
19 level elections already carry a significance of  
20 local magnitude. That takes a lot of energy on  
21 behalf of the citizens to educate themselves about  
22 the programs, the platforms that the candidates

1 are running and with last elections we saw more  
2 than a dozen candidates for council seats. If  
3 citizens are -- if residents are expected to make  
4 informed choices, we should afford them time to  
5 educate themselves about the candidates. If we  
6 were to schedule our elections to coincide with  
7 state elections, federal elections as is one of  
8 the ideas, my fear is that municipal level  
9 elections would just be swallowed in partisanship.  
10 Our elections right now are non-partisan in a  
11 larger national level or state level issues and we  
12 essentially would risk losing an informed vote on  
13 municipal election-- on the municipal candidates.  
14 So, I think that the scheduling should stay in the  
15 off years. It really allows us as residents of  
16 Rockville to have the peace and quiet to educate  
17 ourselves and make informed decisions. Thank you.

18 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you. Thank  
19 you. There are apparently no raised hands. Just to  
20 remind you, if you'd like to speak raise your hand  
21 even if you've spoken once. We'll make we'll take  
22 your order. Okay Mr. Russo.

1           MR. RUSSO: Yes, piggy backing on the  
2 previous speaker, I would also support keeping  
3 Rockville elections in the off year. I guess I  
4 would worry too that we would not be able to do  
5 mail-in voting if -- what the implication would be  
6 if we went to match the state or the presidential  
7 election years would we be able to still do our  
8 mail-in vote which I think was a big success in  
9 2019 I guess it was. That would be another concern  
10 I would have. Would we be able to maintain our  
11 mail-in vote if we were to align with state or  
12 federal elections.

13           MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you. Mr.  
14 Moore.

15           MR. MOORE: Hello, as the previous  
16 speaker did, I would also like to reference the  
17 idea behind changing the years of the elections. I  
18 personally am also fairly partial to the off-year  
19 elections. I get the idea behind wanting to boost  
20 turn out in our elections. That's a laudable goal  
21 and I would like to see our elections have a  
22 little more participation. That's just seems to

1 be the nature of municipal elections, people don't  
2 want to always participate. But I like the --  
3 what's the word I'm looking for? The specialness  
4 of doing them in their own time. I mean having  
5 these -- in many people's mind these small  
6 municipal races being given their due that they'd  
7 probably wouldn't get if they're having to compete  
8 with the noise around a presential or even a  
9 gubernatorial election. Thank you.

10 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you.  
11 Commissioner Hodges.

12 MR. HODGES: Yes, I have a question for  
13 the last speaker, if that's possible?

14 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Yes, Mr. Moore.  
15 Would you like me to open his mike and you talk to  
16 him?

17 MR. HODGES: Yeah.

18 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Yes, okay.

19 MR. HODGES: Mr. Moore, thank you for  
20 your question. Your question kind of (inaudible)  
21 to the comments we've heard this evening. I think  
22 my question would be why is it -- what gives you

1 the impression that if Rockville were to hold  
2 their -- our municipal elections that would  
3 somehow, that presidential election would kind of  
4 like somehow overshadow our efforts. What gives  
5 you that impression? I'm just kind of curious on  
6 your thoughts on that.

7 MR. MOORE: Well, a lot of my background  
8 is actually in working in elections, being a  
9 campaign person and usually if like-- let's say  
10 there is a presidential election going on. The  
11 90% of the people are just going to be concerned  
12 about that presidential election in my experience  
13 at least. Going door to door and talking to  
14 voters, most of the time when you talk to voters,  
15 if there is a presidential election going on they  
16 are not-- they'll vote in the whatever municipal  
17 election is going on but they aren't going to pay  
18 as nearly as much attention to it as they would.  
19 There's definitely more people that would vote in  
20 a presidential election year than a off- cycle  
21 municipal election but the people voting in the  
22 off- cycle municipal election will actually have

1 done a lot of, in my experience actually, they  
2 will have done a lot of research with actual  
3 candidates then the people that just show up  
4 because there is a presidential election going on.  
5 If that makes sense. I don't know if I explained  
6 that correctly but that's in my experience.

7 MR. HODGES: I want to make sure that I  
8 understand you. Your voice, point of view might  
9 represent other voices as well. So, what you are  
10 saying is that there is no automatic spill-over  
11 effect from a presidential election and people  
12 caring about voting locally that would, that is  
13 what you've experienced.

14 MR. MOORE: In my experience, don't get  
15 me wrong, there are people who vote specifically  
16 in presidential election years that will also  
17 research their local municipal stuff. But there's  
18 so many people who do no research at all and who  
19 go out to just vote on the presidential election  
20 and then just, let's say pick the -- well, I guess  
21 it wouldn't really count with our elections  
22 because they are non-partisan but they just pick

1 the party going down the line. More in this case  
2 it would be like picking just whoever's name  
3 they've heard.

4 MR. HODGES: Got it. Thank you very much  
5 for your time.

6 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Okay, we have one  
7 more speaker hand raised. Please. Mr. Goldfinger.

8 MR. GOLDFINGER: This is my first time  
9 attending one of these meetings so I've just been  
10 sort of an observer recently appointed to one of  
11 the city's commissions. But listening to the last  
12 couple of comments, I've been a resident of the  
13 city for better than 45 years I think. I remember  
14 when city elections were held by themselves in, I  
15 believe the spring and turnout was really pitiful  
16 which is why -- I think- we moved to combining it  
17 with other elections on a larger scale to get  
18 voters out. So, I think the question is do we want  
19 informed voters which may be in the 20% of the  
20 electorate category or do we want more people  
21 participating. I think that's what we need to  
22 consider. Does that make sense? So, we've done

1 both in this city in my recollection and I think  
2 we need to look at both sides of that particular  
3 coin. So, I will go back to being an observer of  
4 the meeting. Thank you very much for your time.

5 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you. Okay,  
6 the next hand is Ms. Funkhauser (phonetic).

7 MS. FUNKHAUSER: Thank you. I just  
8 wanted to respond to Mr. Goldfinger if I could. He  
9 is correct. Years ago, municipal elections were in  
10 the spring in April, I think. The reason that they  
11 were changed to November was for a couple of  
12 reasons, I believe. One was because that was the  
13 more formal time for the elections occur, but it  
14 also had to do with the city's budget cycle  
15 because the fiscal year of the city begins on July  
16 1st, the mayor and council would barely be  
17 inaugurated when they would have to vote on the  
18 budget. By having elections in November, the mayor  
19 and council could be creating the budget and then  
20 at the end of July they'd have a complete  
21 knowledge.

22 But I also wanted to commend the

1 commission when I read the questions that were  
2 sent some time ago and I read some of the other  
3 things that the mayor and council said we could  
4 look at if we wanted to. I was blown away. I  
5 thought boy, are we going to (inaudible) what the  
6 sky should be red instead of blue? I mean it was  
7 just amazing to me. So, I congratulate you for  
8 taking on all of this even if you were just  
9 concentrating on elections. That part would have a  
10 been a lot of work in itself. So, thank you very  
11 much on behalf of the city.

12 MR. EVANS: Thank you.

13 MS. FUNKHAUSER: I appreciate it.

14 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you. Alright  
15 next, we have Mr. Fisher.

16 MR. FISHER: Hello? Can you hear me?

17 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Yes, we can hear  
18 you.

19 MR. FISHER: Okay. I'm Steven Fisher,  
20 I've been a resident of Rockville for nearly 65  
21 years coming this October. Also, I run for  
22 council in two very interesting years. One was in

1 1984 in April and the other was November of 1985.  
2 So, I've bridged the transition that occurred. It  
3 was pretty clear to me that the shift from April  
4 to November in terms of the electorate was to put  
5 people in a more familiar frame of mind. November  
6 is the month we elect people to office and that  
7 was in my perspective as a candidate one of the  
8 primary reasons for doing so.

9           The question of now shifting our  
10 non-partisan elections to a potential partisan  
11 election year cycle, meaning the even years in  
12 November, I definitely would not recommend that  
13 considering mayor council members are  
14 non-partisan. Now they would have to make an  
15 appearance on a partisan election ballot. All the  
16 groups that put out sample ballots, league of  
17 women voters excetera, would now have to identify  
18 that there is an additional group of candidates  
19 who are not affiliated with either political party  
20 running in a particular election in one locale.  
21 That adds first of all to the cost of their  
22 ballots and also the confusion that there is so

1 many races to be looked at, most people aren't  
2 going to go that far down. So, the idea that we  
3 would gain a number of new voters, I don't think  
4 will pan out.

5 In fact, the transitions I've noticed  
6 since at time first moving to a November election  
7 didn't really increase the turnout. I believe two  
8 years later the city abandoned its own  
9 non-partisan voter registration system and went  
10 with Montgomery county, which is a partisan  
11 registration system assuming that all these  
12 registered voters and living in Rockville who were  
13 not registered with the city would somehow gain  
14 interest in city elections and participate. That  
15 is not proven to be the case. The people who are  
16 interested in city elections are the ones who  
17 participate in city matters and board and  
18 commission members and so forth. The city has had  
19 a difficult time finding people just to fill those  
20 roles let alone people interested in helping  
21 people get elected to city council or to run  
22 themselves. The diversity of the city is a big

1 challenge. I noticed that when I was a candidate  
2 and I used the voter list from the city, if there  
3 weren't voters on a particular street, there was  
4 no reason for me to go down there. However, it is  
5 a street within the city of Rockville and those  
6 residents may indeed need some services or have  
7 their issues brought before the mayor and council  
8 to be addressed. The issue of having people not  
9 participating in city elections and not being  
10 registered can't easily be addressed if they're  
11 non-citizens or if simply don't choose to be  
12 active in city politics but prefer the partisan  
13 flavored politics and devote all their time and  
14 energy and resources to those races. That would  
15 also impact the city if we were to combine with  
16 state or federal elections that there is a limited  
17 pool of money out there for candidates to obtain.  
18 If you have limited resources and you want to  
19 support a gubernatorial or state senatorial or  
20 congressional candidate, you probably aren't going  
21 to save a lot of money just for mayor council  
22 candidates because there're too far down the list

1 for you to really consider worth investing in.  
2 That makes it difficult for the candidates who  
3 want to run because where are they going to get  
4 the money unless they're financial independent and  
5 can do so. So, that would be my take on the issue.  
6 Thank you.

7 MS. TAYLOR-FERRRELL: Thank you. I think  
8 that Commissioner Valeri wanted to speak?

9 MS. VALERI: Yes, I actually just wanted  
10 to plaussit to everybody including the people that  
11 still had their hands up, that I am a big fan of  
12 history. I think that we need to learn from it in  
13 order not to repeat it. But the focus of the  
14 Commission is looking forward and looking at how  
15 to build a structure for the mayor and council of  
16 the future and voters in the future. So, I would  
17 love to hear from anyone how they feel these  
18 voting proposals and the difference systems and  
19 having representative districts or not or moving  
20 the data or not, looking forward how do you think  
21 this could affect participation in our elections?  
22 Recognizing that as the 2020 census notes we have

1 grown as a city. We're more populated now and so,  
2 I just wanted to get a sense from folks about  
3 that.

4 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Okay, we still have  
5 some hands raised so, Ms. Valeri we're going to go  
6 back to the hands and hope there is responses for  
7 you. Next is Ms. Wolarsky (phonetic).

8 MS. WOLARSKY: I wanted to go back to  
9 the link between scheduling and voter turn-out.  
10 I'm not convinced that this link is substantiated.  
11 Commissioner Valeri, I really appreciate your  
12 encouragement to think forward and I respond to  
13 this with a consideration that the past election  
14 was the very first vote by mail election during  
15 which the vote by mail concept was tested in a  
16 municipal election east of Mississippi. It was  
17 almost the first selected --it wasn't like a trial  
18 of concept right? Proof of concept and in this  
19 election voter turnout was doubled from the  
20 previous election. So, if we have a successful  
21 proof of concept that has occurred in one  
22 instance, I'm not convinced that this successful

1 proof of concept should be immediately abandoned  
2 in other to seek another concept to achieve the  
3 same results. If doubling voter turnout is not  
4 enough, I'm not sure that there are statistical  
5 examples out there around the nation in which  
6 voter turnout in municipal elections was doubled  
7 by switching from one method to another twice in a  
8 row. So, I think that we also need to pause and  
9 stick to one method and make sure that, okay if we  
10 committed to doing vote by mail that we do vote by  
11 mail and really see that whether it works or  
12 whether it doesn't work. Some of the previous  
13 speakers said it very clearly that if we switch  
14 co-scheduling as in the same year as national or  
15 gubernatorial elections, we very much effectively  
16 abandon the very concept of vote by mail because  
17 of how differently elections are administered for  
18 those races. So, that's number one. That is  
19 looking forward. We you know, that the city only  
20 did it once. The city needs to do it at least one  
21 or two more times to actually see if we are able  
22 to increase voter turnout right?

1           Now in terms of the other questions I  
2 wanted to also add I do think that there is value  
3 in looking at kind of proportional representation  
4 thru districts and it is precisely for the reasons  
5 that other speakers have already outlined that the  
6 composition is so very different of the city that  
7 we have larger HOA districts, we have older  
8 communities, we have very diverse communities in  
9 terms of socio-demographic compositions but also  
10 ownership composition of residences. The idea that  
11 there is a candidate who is from a particular  
12 community and is running on behalf of that  
13 community to represent that community in the  
14 council is very appealing to me. My concern is  
15 that there might actually not be competition if  
16 there are districts -- depending on how many seats  
17 there are and how it's all structured. I would  
18 imagine that there might not be competition in  
19 some districts and that there might be vigorous  
20 competition among other districts of this city.  
21 Then how is that type of election truly  
22 representative and open and transparent and

1 competitive if there is not enough competition, if  
2 we already see that there are so many people  
3 hailing from certain parts of the city as  
4 candidates. So, that wouldn't entail probably a  
5 lot lot more outreach and a lot more resources on  
6 behalf of the city going into that work. Thank  
7 you.

8 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you, Ms.  
9 Funkhauser.

10 MS. FUNKHAUSER: I'm sorry, I didn't  
11 mean to raise my hand. I'm sorry.

12 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Okay, thank you.  
13 Mr. Fulton.

14 MR. FULTON: In sort of in response to  
15 Commissioner Valeri and piggy-backing on the  
16 previous comments with regards to districting,  
17 well I think it's definitely something that should  
18 be looked into. There's a lot of support on it. I  
19 said that earlier that I was standing in favor of  
20 it. I don't stand in favor of just districted  
21 council persons. I feel strongly that there should  
22 be some at larges as well. I'm thinking about it

1 from a representation perspective. The one side  
2 is, yes there are, I don't know why we keep going  
3 on to the HOAs, there are pockets of small  
4 communities, there is segments of this city that  
5 are not represented by a council person who hails  
6 from that area, but I and everyone else on this  
7 call have four council members that I can speak  
8 with that are representing me and one mayor. I  
9 would be concerned if that would go down to simply  
10 one. I also I would worry that could possibly  
11 further, I don't know, further a divide whether  
12 perceived or real versus certain neighborhood when  
13 it comes to certain city issues. I feel strongly  
14 that just one mayor might not be enough to bridge  
15 that divide that there needs to be district  
16 representation. But if we're going that route  
17 there needs to be at large representation as well.

18 I echo what I think the previous person  
19 said, I think vote by mail was an overwhelming  
20 success. I don't have any ways to improve it at  
21 the moment, but I think that looking into ways, if  
22 there's even incremental gains to be made that's

1 wonderful. Increasing the voter turnout as best as  
2 we did. I think if you really want to look forward  
3 someone can take a look in the box chain voting.  
4 Maybe not for two years or six years but maybe ten  
5 years down the road. I see one of the  
6 commissioners laughing at my suggestion. So,  
7 that's kind of what I think in terms of looking  
8 forward to the future. Thank you.

9 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Alright thank you.  
10 Mr. Allton (phonetic).

11 MR. ALLTON: Alright. I concur, I think  
12 the voting by mail was a huge success. I would  
13 definitely keep that. I know we went probably from  
14 13% to 24% for voter turnout. I'm optimistic. I  
15 also think going forward having a district person  
16 that is locally, would also bring out -- they  
17 wouldn't just vote for that one person, hopefully  
18 that they would also vote for the -- there would  
19 be other ways that we could either, we could  
20 figure this so that there would be others ways for  
21 us to engage that part of the community. But that  
22 we're doing on the flip side is that, and the

1 research will show this, is that the at large  
2 voting-- I encourage you to research why the at  
3 large voting is not a favored style by many  
4 organizations that are in place to look at the  
5 Voting's Right Act and supported that. I did that  
6 research you should do that research. You have to  
7 look at every paper or thesis that comes out but  
8 it's up to us to read the lines to figure out why  
9 is this so harmful. I think it comes out in our  
10 city's engagement and I think what I really wanted  
11 at the end of the day I want people thinking  
12 Rockville first. That doesn't happen in my  
13 community. My community will go to other  
14 locations, we're on the west side of I-270. We're  
15 geographically separated from many folks. There  
16 are many aspects of this that I've advocated or  
17 lobbied for during the budget but the reality of  
18 it is there aren't many options that-- like when  
19 we had the parking in Town Center. I advocated and  
20 I said that to the current mayor council, parking  
21 is hurting us and data wise how much of it is  
22 hurting us. Our folks go to Rio, they go to

1 Camlins (phonetic), they go to Bethesda, they go  
2 to Town Center. But when you look at this and you  
3 really analyze our city, are our residents  
4 thinking Rockville first? That is the essential  
5 question because if they are not thinking  
6 Rockville first, then our city is hurting. That's  
7 the part that has to be because cities have a  
8 heart and soul. That part of it is, I want people  
9 going to Rockville. I want them to be there first,  
10 I want there to be no other destination. If they  
11 have to go someplace else, we'll figure why they  
12 went someplace else. But that is not what's  
13 happening. How do I know that this isn't  
14 happening? Because we've had to relook at Town  
15 Center all too often. We're doing our best to  
16 look at Town Center constantly and the pandemic  
17 didn't help, but our recovery and our moving  
18 forward is going to require all of us. If we leave  
19 out groups for whatever purpose, for whatever  
20 reason, however it shakes out, that is going to  
21 cost us in a social context. It is going to have a  
22 measurement maybe so profound and we cannot

1 continue going four years with an election where  
2 some of the pieces I've already mentioned we're  
3 not addressing and going forward to do that. So, I  
4 see it as a social aspect in terms of the human  
5 concept and behavior by loyalty to a community. I  
6 also see it as an economic sustainability. I see  
7 it as our responsibility to figure out a way to  
8 get other diverse groups and improve on the good  
9 things we've done so far. So, I would definitely  
10 keep in the mail voting. Thank you.

11 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you. Next,  
12 Ms. Wolawsky.

13 MS. WOLAWSKY: That's an old hand. I  
14 apologize.

15 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Alrighty. Thank  
16 you. Mr. Fisher.

17 MR. FISHER: I have nothing more at this  
18 point.

19 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Alright, No hand.  
20 Mr. Ulton your hand is still up. Did you want to  
21 say anything else?

22 MR. ULTON: I applaud all of you for --

1 my hand was not up. I think it was up from before  
2 so, but I'll just say I admire all of you on the  
3 Commission and what you're trying to do. I applaud  
4 the mayor and council they do to try and pull us  
5 together. I think we'd do better by looking at  
6 this and bringing in different ways of doing that,  
7 so. Sorry, that part.

8 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: No need to  
9 apologize. Thank you.

10 SHERRYL: Is there anyone else on as  
11 attendees that would like to speak or would like  
12 to comment on any other of the charter review  
13 commission's scope of work?

14 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Sherryl, I have an  
15 owner, that's the name that pops up, so I'm going  
16 to open the mike.

17 SHERRYL: Thank you.

18 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Yes. Owner your  
19 mike is open.

20 MS. NEWMAN: Are you talking to me? Can  
21 you hear me?

22 MULTIPLE SPEAKERS: Yes, we can hear

1 you.

2 MS. NEWMAN: Very good, that wasn't my  
3 name but that's fine. Well, I'm Lois Newman and I  
4 sent in a couple of comments many of which have  
5 been stated by other people and I'm not going to  
6 repeat them. But I do agree with the idea of  
7 districts voting being very well researched and  
8 very controversial. It's not as easy as it sounds  
9 and it's not necessarily going to go turnout the  
10 way you think it will where more people from more  
11 districts will vote. It's quite possible you might  
12 have someone win by 25 votes which may or may not  
13 be enough.

14 I would like to suggest to think about  
15 putting a committee under the city manager's  
16 office to work with candidates. One of the things  
17 that can be an issue is candidates don't know what  
18 to do after they've been declared to be a  
19 candidate. They know how to become a candidate but  
20 then what? It is not appropriate for the Board of  
21 Supervisors for Elections to answer those  
22 questions because after all all the board is

1 trying to remain very impartial, very neutral and  
2 really has very little to do with candidates other  
3 than the campaign finance reports which is  
4 necessary for all candidates. So, to help people  
5 decide they want to be a candidate which I believe  
6 is an issue. I think people don't know about  
7 running, don't know what it means to run, don't  
8 know how important it is to serve government. We  
9 may need to consider training for candidates,  
10 training to be a candidate, how does one become a  
11 candidate, why does one become a candidate? And  
12 then sort of a tether to the city through the city  
13 mayor's office and again not through the  
14 supervisors of elections, it's inappropriate - but  
15 to work with candidates to answer questions.  
16 Example, how do I put up a sign? Can I put up a  
17 sign? How do I put up information on the website?  
18 What information is appropriate for me to put on  
19 the website? Where do candidates get answers to  
20 those questions? Right now there's nobody. There's  
21 no way for candidates, other than to read the  
22 materials which things are within the materials,

1 but there is an awful lot coming at a candidate  
2 when they're trying to get their campaign  
3 together. So, I think there should be a way, for  
4 potential candidates to get information to  
5 encourage them to run. If that happens and there's  
6 a lot of outreach for them in that perspective,  
7 you won't need districts because there'll be more  
8 people coming from more districts and representing  
9 more districts to run and then, there needs to be  
10 an effort to encourage the people in those  
11 districts to vote. So, just because you have  
12 somebody representing a district does not mean  
13 you'll see the turnout.

14           So, I think to keep it simple, this  
15 would be a simple thing to do, rather than  
16 converting the entire ballot to districts putting  
17 two or more and creating officials to represent  
18 the districts and having candidates run for  
19 districts which has a lot of steps to it and can  
20 be fairly complicated and may not give you the  
21 result that you're looking for. I see this as an  
22 easy solution and to a problem that has existed

1 for quite some time. So, I thank you for your ears  
2 and best of luck.

3 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you so much.  
4 Commissioner Valeri.

5 MS. VALERI: I was wondering if you  
6 could open up her mike again? I actually had a  
7 question for Miss Newman.

8 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Yes ma'am.

9 MS. VALERI: If she is amenable to that.

10 MS. NEWMAN: Go on.

11 MS. VALERI: Good evening. I'm wondering  
12 when we're looking at the issue of representative  
13 districts, you touched on what effect it would  
14 have on turnout. How would you think it would  
15 affect the overall election as far as increasing  
16 geographic diversity of candidates or people  
17 looking to run?

18 MS. NEWMAN: Say the first part again.  
19 How --what was the first part?

20 MS. VALERI: Sorry--

21 MS. NEWMAN: How do I think keeping it  
22 as it is?

1 MS. VALERI: Oh no, I meant as far as  
2 representative districts--

3 MS. NEWMAN: Yes.

4 MS. VALERI: --not looking at it, excuse  
5 me not looking at it from a turnout perspective,  
6 but looking at it from a geographic diversity  
7 perspective when it comes to the candidates who  
8 are running or for the individuals who win an  
9 election. Do you feel that districts would  
10 increase our geographic diversity in who gets  
11 selected.

12 MS. NEWMAN: Not necessarily. I don't  
13 think so. I think it can be done. By talking to  
14 people personally, by going to the different  
15 districts, having a session on: so you want to be  
16 a candidate? Would you might be interested in  
17 becoming a candidate and having a face to face and  
18 a person to person contact with people in  
19 districts or certain regions, can be a specific  
20 district but it can also be a particular part of  
21 the city and then encourage people to run. I don't  
22 think just because you create a district, people

1 are going to say, okay now I'm going to run and  
2 I'm going to represent whatever it is I'm supposed  
3 to representing. I think that can be done by  
4 personal contact, by going to the districts, by  
5 home association meetings for example, and  
6 encourage talking to people about running for  
7 office.

8           The other thing that occurred to me with  
9 your question is just because someone represents  
10 -- is elected by a district does not mean they're  
11 true to their districts. It is possible to live in  
12 a district but be on top of everything that is  
13 going on in that district. Conversely, it is  
14 possible to elected to represent that district,  
15 not by district system but represent that district  
16 and to be very concerned about what's going on in  
17 there. I don't think districts -- I just don't  
18 think districts are the answer.

19           MS. VALERI: Thank you.

20           MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you. No more  
21 hands up. We also encourage you to take the  
22 survey, that's right on the side, the slide

1 survey. We'd love your feedback there as well.

2 SHERRYL: Okay, if there are no more  
3 participants that want to speak tonight then I'll  
4 offer closing remarks from our chair Mr. Fred  
5 Evans.

6 SPEAKER: There are two hands that just  
7 went up.

8 SHERRYL: Okay.

9 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Shall I? Okay.

10 SHERRYL: Open their mikes? Yes.

11 Mr. EVANS: I see-- making a Joe.

12 JOE: I see, I'm going to ask council  
13 member Ashton (phonetic) to speak.

14 MS. ASHTON: I just want to say thank  
15 you. I just wanted to not influence or say any  
16 comments on this conversation cause I think there  
17 are a lot of perspectives and I just wanted a lot  
18 of those ideas to be free flowing. I just want to  
19 thank this Charter of Review Commission for the  
20 thorough outreach that you're doing and everyone  
21 who has been participating in this discussion that  
22 helps us make this city better. Thank you.

1 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: Thank you. Mr.  
2 Gillespie.

3 MR. GILLESPIE: Hi. I don't have much to  
4 add. I also just wanted to say thank you. I did  
5 have one more thing I guess. That is if it's  
6 suggested that we ultimately move to having  
7 representative districts, I would again strongly  
8 encourage this commission to take a look and the  
9 questions about what choice in terms of our  
10 voting. I would agree with that or take that a  
11 step further and seek another sort of endorsing  
12 method. So, that's all I had to add.

13 SHERRYL: Thank you. Ms. Ferrell.

14 MS. TAYLOR-FERRELL: I'm going to try to  
15 run that over to Mr. Evans for your closing  
16 remarks. Again, I want to thank all of the  
17 participants tonight and for their input and we  
18 want to let you know that that survey that was in  
19 the chat is also available on the city's website  
20 and it will be open until March 25th. Thank you.

21 MR. EVANS: Thank you Ms. Ferrell. Thank  
22 you. Danny, You did a great job. I appreciate all

1 the feedback. I want to introduce one final member  
2 of our commission, John Becker who is with us this  
3 evening. Great to see you John.

4 MR. BECKER: Great to see everyone.  
5 Great to see you.

6 MR. EVANS: On behalf of the Charter  
7 Review Commission, I give a big heartfelt thank  
8 you to each of you for your committed  
9 participation to this town hall meeting. We would  
10 review every suggestion as we prepare our final  
11 recommendations to Rockville's city mayor and  
12 council members. Additionally, we encourage each  
13 of you to inform your city neighbors and friends  
14 about the work of the Commission. Please,  
15 encourage them to participate and see our  
16 questionnaire which is located on the city's  
17 website which is the rockvillemd.gov, and then the  
18 site is Charter Review Commission. You'll be able  
19 to find it relatively easily. Finally, if you  
20 have any additional suggestions or comments, do  
21 not hesitate to forward them to the commission's  
22 webpage. Once again, from my heart, I thank all

1 of you for your participation, the commissioners,  
2 all other folks who joined us tonight and it was a  
3 very great positive, conductive meeting and we  
4 look forward to the hard work as we proceed.  
5 Thank you very much.

6 So, we can leave Danny?

7 (Whereupon, the PROCEEDINGS were  
8 adjourned.)

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

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