

# Charter amendments pursued for fall ballot

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**City voters** may be asked to again amend the city charter amended last year.

BRADENTON BEACH – The Concerned Neighbors of Bradenton Beach (CNOBB) group hopes to get three charter amendment questions placed on the November ballot.

During last week's steering committee meeting, the nine attending members voted in favor of asking city voters to eliminate City Commission voting wards, decrease commission candidate residency requirements and prevent the City Commission from interpreting the city charter with commission-initi-

ated ordinances and resolutions.

Two CNOBB members picked up ordinance initiation petition forms last week. The group must now collect signatures from 50 registered city voters or 10 percent of those who voted in the last fall's city election, whichever is greater – 612 people voted in last year's lone city commission race.

After the signatures are verified by the Supervisor of Elections Office, a citizen-drafted charter amendment ordinance will be presented to the City Commission for non-binding review, and then onto city voters in November.

Later in the week, City Attorney Ricinda Perry e-mailed her concerns to CNOBB member Reed Mapes.

She asked why the members of the newly-formed CNOBB didn't request the charter amendments when the vol-

unteer charter review committee (CRC) reviewed the charter in late 2015. The proposed CRC amendments supported by the City Commission were then placed on the Aug. 30, 2016, primary ballot.

"My office has been contacted by a number of citizens asking why a group is looking to circumvent the charter review process and take it hostage," Perry wrote.

She also said concerns were raised about the cost of amending the charter again and CNOBB disregarding the CRC's work.

## COMMISSION WARDS

The CRC opposed eliminating commission wards, but CNOBB members voted 5-4 last week to pursue a charter amendment question that proposes

eliminating all four of the city's geographically-based commission wards. Four of the nine CNOBB members preferred a north-south, two-ward approach.

"I think it would be easier to get candidates, but that may go for people that are opposing us also. People getting appointed by the council is the worst way of getting commissioners," John Metz said.

Last year the commission appointed Marilyn Maro to the Ward 2 seat after no one ran for it.

"You have to look at what the opposition's going to be doing. There have been times in our past where areas like The Pines, like Sandpiper, has provided all the representation. If we go to zero,

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## SUNSHINE: Meeting raises legal concerns

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### EARLY FALL-OUT

As the result of the parking garage discussion, Vincent, the CNOBB leader, is considering leaving the planning board to avoid future conflicts.

"I want to take it under advisement with good friends and neighbors. CNOBB is more important to me than planning and zoning and I'll tender my resignation, with their advice and counsel, as soon as I have the opportunity. There is a conflict, and it will come again," he said on Saturday.

"There is a collective responsibility of all the members to stay within the framework of the law. We may have to amend our bylaws to prohibit appointed members from any city board

from being on the steering committee," he added.

Vincent is awaiting response to a letter he previously sent to the Florida Commission on Ethics seeking opinions on city board members participating in CNOBB discussions.

### QUESTIONABLE DISCUSSION

Mapes brought up parking garages when the steering committee was discussing potential charter amendment questions they hope to get placed on the November ballot.

"I have one other one I think is an extremely sensitive one ... to prohibit construction of a parking garage," Mapes said.

The city's comp plan prohibits stand-

alone or multi-level parking structures and facilities, but the City Commission could amend that with a fourth-fifths supra-majority vote.

Mapes incorrectly stated that a parking garage is included in the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) budget – it is simply one of many unfunded potential projects listed in the updated CRA plan.

Mapes also provided comment he attributed to absent steering committee member and Bradenton Beach Marina President Mike Bazzy.

"He felt it was fair to say only in a commercial district," Mapes said, of Bazzy's position on parking garages.

"I say no parking garage built for public paid parking. It doesn't mat-

ter whether it's by the municipality or some huge corporation," Metz said.

"It isn't for our use, that's for sure," Shay added.

"What if your proposal is defeated? Put that choice on the ballot and have the possibility that now parking garages are actually allowed? I'm uncomfortable with that," Vincent said.

At this point, Sunshine compliance was finally mentioned.

"I don't think we can go there in this meeting without it being a Sunshine problem," Mapes said.

Shay agreed, and the discussion ended.

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