

**ELK GROVE CHARTER COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
CITY COUNCIL CHAMBER, 8400 LAGUNA PALMS WAY
TUESDAY, JULY 15, 2008**

1. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL

The Regular Commission meeting of July 15, 2008 was called to order by Chair Allen at 6:02 p.m.

Present: Commissioners – Allen, Sendejas-Lopez, Loveland, Martin, and Orrock

Absent: Commissioner Johnson (arrived at 6:04 p.m.)

Also Present: City Attorney Susan Cochran and City Clerk Susan Blackston

Christopher Orrock led the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT (on non-agenda items)

None.

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION/VOTE:

Commissioner Orrock made a motion, Loveland second, to approve the July 1, 2008 minutes as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Ayes: Commissioners – Allen, Farley, Johnson, Lopez, Loveland, Martin, and Orrock

Noes: Commissioners – None

Absent: Commissioners – None

4. Presentation by Stephen Kinney of *Public Opinion Strategies* regarding proposed telephone survey

Steven Kinney explained that the overall purpose of the telephone survey was to gauge the public's opinion on the concept of Elk Grove becoming a charter city. He mentioned that the longer version of the survey (*filed as Item 4a*) included some questions that were asked in a previous Elk Grove poll, which would provide the City with tracking information. He reported that telephone surveys can last as long as 25 minutes; however, the length of the proposed survey is 15 minutes. The survey is written at a sixth grade level. It typically takes 15 to 20 calls to obtain one complete response. Three hundred staff members make the calls between 4:30 p.m. and 9:30 p.m. Sundays are favorable for telephone surveys because calls can be made all afternoon. If an individual terminates the call any time prior to completion, it is not used. He explained that "intensity" questions are very important, i.e. questions that ask whether the person strongly

favors or opposes a concept, because it provides a more accurate response. He felt that the first question, "... *tell me if you believe Elk Grove is headed in the right direction, or do you think Elk Grove is off on the wrong track*" was absolutely vital in keeping respondents engaged from the outset. Other critically important questions pertained to demographics and the open ended question (#24) from which a verbatim response is recorded. Demographics are required to ensure a representative sample of the community is obtained.

The Commission agreed to use the shorter telephone survey questionnaire (*filed as 4b*). Mr. Kinney estimated the cost to be \$26,000 as written.

At the request of the Commission, Mr. Kinney discussed each question during which the following was decided:

Questions to remain as written: #1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 18 to 22.

Questions to be deleted: #5a and 13 to 16.

Questions to be amended:

Mr. Kinney suggested that questions #4b and 5b be rotated and that question 4a be asked of all 400 people surveyed.

#6 – Commissioner Johnson asked that the following words be added: ..."*day to day*" responsibilities "*of running the city*" currently handled by the City Manager.

#10 – Commissioner Johnson asked that the words "*as is currently practiced in Elk Grove*" be added to the end of the question.

#11 – City Attorney Cochran suggested that the question read, "*As we consider the membership of the Elk Grove City Council, there are currently five members elected who then select the mayor. If the mayor were directly elected, how many council members would you prefer: 4, 6, or 8?*"

#17a and #17b – Chair Allen asked that the survey test the concept of an elected mayor, without the added responsibilities of a "strong" mayor.

Commissioner Johnson favored keeping the term limit question (#13) in the survey, as well as adding a question to ask whether there was support for providing local vendor preference for contracts even if it meant paying more tax dollars for the contract; however, the consensus of the Commission was to include neither in the survey at this time.

In response to Commission inquiries, Mr. Kinney anticipated finalizing the questionnaire tomorrow. He stated that the survey could be conducted on July 20, 21, and 22 if the contract were approved by 12:00 p.m. on July 17.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Sharon Lynes expressed concern that the survey would be conducted so soon because she did not believe many people were familiar with the charter concept. She felt it would be helpful to include a simple “for” and “against” question to know whether a city charter was commonly accepted or not. She was not in favor of asking questions related to political party, race, or age. She believed that a question regarding term limits would be very important to include. She asked about roles and responsibilities of an elected mayor and questioned why there were no media representatives present at the meeting, to which it was explained that details related to an elected mayor were not yet known; however, the position could be part-time. Additionally, it was noted that it was the responsibility of the City’s Public Information Officer to communicate with the media.

5. Review of “Request for Qualifications” for public outreach consultant services

City Attorney Cochran stated that the public outreach consultant services were expected to exceed \$50,000. Once responses from the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) are received, a determination could be made as to which consultants would be preferred for each task delineated in the scope of work. The scope of work includes three areas: 1) Public meeting, community workshop, and focus group – professional facilitation services; 2) public information services; and 3) professional community event management services. Recommendation(s) will be brought to Council for its consideration. The next possible meeting that Council could consider awarding a public outreach consultant services contract would be August 27.

Public Information Officer Christine Brainerd reported that 25 firms would receive the RFQ.

6. Review of information related to Capital Improvement Projects, bid results, and reports on City Manager approved purchases and contracts authorized by Elk Grove Municipal Code Chapter 3.42 (January through June 2008)

Commissioner Sendejas-Lopez mentioned that, as the charter is being developed, the Commission should consider including a preference percentage range for local businesses bidding for city contracts.

Commissioner Johnson believed it would require 10% to have any real effect. He questioned whether local businesses could be allowed to provide a second bid, noting that the practice would allow Elk Grove businesses to prosper, while also helping taxpayers.

Chair Allen pointed out that the charter would be much more likely to pass if it were simple, straightforward, and did not include any controversial topics.

Vice Chair Orrock mentioned that he and Chair Allen met with the City Manager prior to the meeting.

In response to questions posed by Commissioner Johnson, City Manager Laura Gill stated that she felt the current amount of \$50,000 for City Manager authority provided in the City's purchasing ordinance was appropriate. She acknowledged that an inflation factor might be a good idea to include. She cautioned that, with Public Works contracts, it is important to be responsible as well as cost effective. Ms. Gill indicated that she would confer with the City Attorney to develop a list of public works projects and amounts that could prudently be placed under the City Manager's authority and would report back at the Commission's next meeting.

7. Discussion regarding Modesto and Folsom City Charters

Chair Allen reiterated his belief that an uncomplicated charter would much more likely be approved by voters.

Commissioner Johnson was opposed to using another city's charter as a starting point. He favored the Commission arriving at its own conclusions and drafting Elk Grove's charter from the beginning.

8. NEW BUSINESS / GENERAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

a) Outreach communication from Charter Commission

Chair Allen reported that he had received phone calls in response to the outreach letter (filed). Interest was expressed from a Sheldon area group and two speaking engagements have been arranged in August.

Commissioner Johnson asked whether the Charter Commission meetings could be televised, to which City Clerk Blackston replied she would look into it and report back.

Commissioner Martin suggested that the telephone survey questions be placed on the City's website in an interactive format where citizens could email responses or download the form and fax it back, or deliver their responses.

b) Resignation letter from Charter Commissioner William Farley

City Clerk Blackston reported that the Charter Commission vacancy is an at-large position voted on by the City Council, which requires an open recruitment. A newspaper publication soliciting applications will be published on July 16 and a letter was mailed to all previous applicants advising them that a vacancy exists. The application deadline is August 15, with appointment by Council anticipated at its August 27 meeting.

Commissioner Martin asked that the Commission reconsider its Tuesday meeting schedule in the fall.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.

ATTEST:

/s/ Susan J. Blackston.
City Clerk