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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Voting Reform and Charter Revision Task Force
Tuesday, September 16, 2025 - 6:30 PM
Conducted remotely on Zoom

MINUTES

Board Members Present: Ed Hartzog (Co-chair), Shari Weiner (Co-chair), Elizabeth Rose, Barbara Rudder, DJ Falkson

Board Members Unexcused: Michele Birnbaum

Approximate Number of Public Attendees: 5

The meeting was called to order at 6:30.

1. **A review and discussion on the New York City Charter amendments for the November 2025 Election ballot.**

Voting Reform and Charter Revision Task Force Co-Chair Shari Weiner opened the meeting by explaining that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the wording of the 6 amendments proposed by the City Charter Change Commission (Mayor), which had been approved to be placed on the November 4th ballot. As Community Boards cannot take a position, nor advocate for the passage or defeat of a specific amendment, no resolutions will be proposed, and there will be a general discussion on the amendments.

The following are the 6 proposed amendments to the New York City Charter:

Proposal #1: Amendment to Allow an Olympic Sports Complex on Forest Preserve.
- This would authorize the state to use 323 acres of preserved land for the complex.

Proposal #2: Fast Track Affordable Housing to Build More Affordable Housing.
- Fast-track publicly financed affordable housing in the 15 community districts that produce the least affordable housing. The proposal maintains community boards' ability to be involved in the review process. However, it will leave affordable housing no longer to be subjected to review and final decision of the New York City Council.

Proposal #3: Simplify Review of Modest Housing and Infrastructure.
- Simplifies review of modest housing (including increases to residential capacity in low-density and high-density districts by 30% or less) and infrastructure, significantly reducing review time. It will also set up the Expedited Land Use Review Procedure (ELURP). The proposal intends to maintain the community board review with final decision by the City Planning Commission. For modest housing and infrastructure, the current process allows community boards and borough presidents to have 60 days to issue recommendations, then the City Planning Commission would have 30 days to review. If the amendment is approved, it will remove the final decision of the City Planning Commission's 30-day review from the process.

Proposal #4: Establish an Affordable Housing Appeals Board with Council, Borough, and City-Wide Representation.

- If approved, this would create an Affordable Housing Appeals Board with the Council Speaker, local Borough President, and Mayor to review the New York City Council's actions that reject change applications creating affordable housing. Meant to curb members' preferences on land use applications. If not approved, it would leave affordable housing subject to the mayor's veto and final decision by the New York City Council.

Proposal # 5: Create a Digital City Map to modernize City Operations.

- Currently, the City Map consists of paper maps across 5 borough offices, resulting in 8,000 maps citywide. This proposal would require the Department of City Planning (DCP) to create a unified City map by 2026, followed by a digital version to be released by 2029.

Proposal #6: Move Local Elections to Presidential Election Years.

- To move New York City's Primary election and General election dates, so that New York City elections are held in the same year as Federal elections. This proposal would have to be permitted by state law as well. Community Board 8 Manhattan had previously passed a resolution opposing this amendment.

General comments from the public:

- The proposals #2, #3, and #4 all deal in some way with affordable housing. The comment was made that since these amendments were proposed by the Mayor's Charter Change Commission, we shouldn't be surprised that these proposals would take power away from the New York City Council. The New York City Council appealed to the Board of Elections not to place these amendments on the November ballot, but such a request was denied.
- For proposals #2 and #3, it is good that the community board review is maintained in both proposals.
- For proposal #3, 30% is less than current zoning allows.
- There are concerns with proposal #4, that individual New York City Council Members lose their ability to have influence or even stop projects not wanted by the neighbors.
- From the public, proposal #5 makes sense, and they couldn't believe it has taken this long to be accomplished.
- It was made clear that proposal #6 had previously been opposed by Community Board 8 Manhattan, with discussions with the public being on the matter of switching the city elections to even-numbered years.

The Co-Chair Ed Hartzog reminded everyone that early voting starts on October 25th, and the amendments are on the second page of the ballot.

2. Old Business

No items of Old Business were discussed.

3. New Business

No items of New Business were discussed.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 PM.

Sharon Weiner and Ed Hartzog, Co-Chairs