



Public Meeting 5/3/21 NYC Racial Justice Commission

APPEARANCES:

- Jennifer Jones Austin, Chair
- Henry Garrido, Vice Chair
- K. Bain
- Ana Bermudez, Esq
- Rev. Fred Davie
- Lurie Daniel Favors, Esq.
- Darrick Hamilton
- Christopher Kui
- Yesenia Mata
- J. Philip Thompson
- Jo-Ann Yoo
- Anusha Venkataraman
- Kapil Longani
- Melanie Ash
- Alexis Blane
- Kwame Akosah

Jennifer Jones Austin (JJA) 0:00

I want to thank everybody for coming and, and for being prompt because we've got a lot that we'd like to cover. In this meeting, we have set aside about an hour and a half. We may not need all that time but the time has been set aside. The agenda for this meeting is straightforward, mainly to focus on the Charter and have a 101, like Charter 101 Presentation from the Council to the Mayor and his team, Kapil Longani and Alexis Blane, and then our General Counsel, the Commission's General Counsel, will walk us through Chapter 68, Conflicts of Interest. Before we do that we're going to hear from our Executive Director. We'll take a few minutes just to review the conversation of last week. I will ask before we even engage in that for a motion to approve the minutes from the last meeting. They were sent to all of you. I hope you've had an opportunity to review them and at this point, I will ask for a motion to approve the minutes. Motion moved. May I have a [Second]. Thank you. Any questions, comments, proposed changes?

Anusha Venkataraman (AV) 01:26

I missed who's second in the motion? who was that?

Henry Garrido (HG) 01:29

I would be Henry.

AV 01:31

Wonderful.

JJA 01:34

Good deal, and let me just also, just for the public, you know this is the third meeting, I want you to be aware that you can actually see the minutes from the first two minute meetings at nyc.gov/Charter under the slash Charter and it's under the meetings tab when you go there, so you can find it there. Alright, having said that and having had the minutes of motion seconded, approval all in favor please say aye.

AI 02:03

Aye.

JJA 02:06

Any opposed? Okay so the meetings from last week have been approved. We're going to again focus on the Charter today and conflicts of interest. Before we do that we're going to review the discussion we had last week very briefly and then we are going to have a motion to adopt the working framework. What I want to first say, I'm going to ask Executive Director Anusha Venkataraman to talk about the work that the staff did prior to last week to put together a working framework. And then hearing the very informative and engaging discussion had last week, she and her team sought to modify and adapt in a responsive way the slides that were put together with definitions and terms in the framework -- with an aim of incorporating the thoughts and the concerns that were raised. I'm going to say that I thank everybody, I truly appreciate the conversation that was had and this is the type of work that we need to be doing together, you know like just hearing each other, taking into consideration the various nuances, perspectives, considerations, and trying to put forth the best work product possible. What we are looking at right now is a working framework. We've got to get moving and we need a working framework. It may not be the end-all be-all and we may find that as we move forward that we need to make further modifications and adaptations to it. But having had the conversation and then having polled via email, the Commission members, to get their perspectives, the team then went to work to modify the framework. And so Anusha is going to present it, and then we will hopefully move to adopt the framework and then move forward. So, please proceed Anusha.

AV 04:16

Thank you so much Chair. So you know, at the last meeting, we presented the framework as a draft for your review, and we did hear so much feedback that was so valuable -- I just wanted to recap some of that feedback to contextualize the updated version of the framework which we distributed to all of you in advance. It's also available on the Charter website at the same link of nyc.gov/Charter under the meetings tab you can find that updated, framework uploaded there for the public to see and utilize as well. I want to highlight the feedback they, we, received both during the meeting and some of the feedback that we received since then as well. So the first was in terms of the definitions that we presented. We included a vision for racial equity and the feedback around that vision was really based on, let's frame it in the positive. Let's emphasize the worth, the talents, the contributions of all people while emphasizing in this vision that race is not and should not be a determinant of economic, political, social or psychological outcomes. So you will see that edit reflected in the updated document. Second in the definition of systemic racism that we shared, there were questions around who was included and who is not included. Based on that feedback, we opted to include the language of black, indigenous, and people of color or bipoc, spelled out to be inclusive while centering the experiences of those who've been

most affected and most impacted by systemic racism. We heard that the term “whiteness” should be used over “white people” since definitions of “whiteness” and who is included in that categories, categorization have shifted and evolved and also that we should clarify our context -- the city and country in which we live -- and why our vision is necessary to be stated. So specifically we emphasize that we’re talking about culture and society in America. Racism and systemic racism certainly look different, feel different in other parts of the world. And that we live in a place in a time where systemic racism has formed and continues to shape the realities within which we live. Lastly and I think most importantly, here so much important discussion centered around the inclusion of opportunity as one of the central mechanisms of racism. A few Commissioners voiced the proposal that equity ought to replace opportunity, but we also heard from most Commissioners really that we should keep the word “opportunity” in there and ensure that we’re truly reclaiming the word to mean that it’s meaningful, it is true, and that that form of opportunity is inclusive and intersectional. As such, we have retained the use of the word “opportunity” and the concept in the framework. I want to emphasize that this is a working framework. We can come back later and amend it, especially as we move through public engagement, hear from community members around the city -- but at this point in time, the framework is here to frame and form and structure our work, but is sort of not to be used in hard and fast decision making. So with that, I want to thank everyone for your meaningful engagement with the framework, both at the meeting and through individual conversations, and thank you for reviewing the updated materials.

JJA 08:28

Thank you. Thank you Executive Director Venkataraman. We are going to move now in the interest of time to bring this matter for the next little while as we begin to work through the actual, do the work, we’re going to bring this to a vote. We need a working frame so that everybody has a context, they have a positioning from which we’re beginning so that we can communicate with the public to help them have a really good sense of how we’re thinking about these issues. And so I’m going to ask now for a motion to adopt the working framework and let me just say that the framework was present with the – I just want to be clear for the record, that we reached out to every Commission member last week via email asking every Commission member to provide their feedback and we heard back from the majority of the Commission members, and that is what Anusha and her team have based their work on. We sought to incorporate the feedback received in the -- to reflect what was said and what we heard based on written feedback. That is, you know, now part of the Charter record. And so, and then the revised slides were forwarded to you earlier today so I’m going to call for a motion to approve the working framework. Do I have a motion to approve?

Ana Bermudez, Esq. (AB) 10:00

I move to approve.

JJA 10:02

Okay, on a motion and seconded by Jo-Ann. Okay. Are there any comments, questions -- I don't want to rehash because we don't have the time, what was presented at the last meeting, but I do want to are there any -- and I understand that not everybody is on the same page with this, but we are beginning with a working framework. Questions? Comments --

LDF: I can't see the raise hand button on my device but I would just, in the copy that I saw, if this is the frame we're going to stick with I would suggest that “Indigenous” be capitalized if it is a placeholder for actual people, might as well go ahead and capitalize POC as well. But beyond

that if this is the ruling of the body then that's fine. I just would note those suggestions for amendment.

JJA 11:03

Okay, thank you. Is there anyone else?

K. Bain (KB) 11:12

This is K. Bain speaking, Good Evening all Commissioners, Chair, Executive Director -- I honestly am in transit and have not had a full opportunity to process, but I'm listening intently to the feedback into the changes that were made and I'm happy that it's a working, work in progress draft that we will be continuing to, to work on and edit. But just want to be clear, I haven't had full opportunity, no pun intended, to focus in on.

JJA 11:48

Thank you very much, appreciate it. Is there another who would like to make a comment? Okay, I will take a vote and just appreciating that you know, people had differing views. I am going to go one Commission member at a time, so I am just -- I will begin with Ana Bermudez.

AB 12:21

What -- Yes, yes -- motion to approve the framework, yes.

JJA 12:30

Okay, Christopher Kui?

Christopher Kui (CK) 12:31

Yes, definitely yes.

JJA 12:34

Okay, Darrick Hamilton.

Darrick Hamilton (DH) 12:34

I do not approve.

JJA 12:38

Okay, thank you. Henry Garrido.

HG 12:41

Hi, yes.

JJA 12:45

Jo-Ann you? Jo-Ann?

Jo-Ann Yoo (JY) 12:55

Didn't see it, yes.

JJA 13:00

Okay. K. Bain?

KB 13:03

Doesn't we, just randomly, I wanted to hear other people

JJA 13:10

Okay so you'd like -- Lurie, Lurie Daniel Favors?

Lurie Daniel Favors, Esq. (LDF) 13:16

Just to be clear, we're moving to adopt the framework as a living frame that can be adjusted going forward as needed?

JJA 13:25

Absolutely.

LDF 13:27

Then I am in agreement with adopting this as a frame for the purposes of moving forward with the understanding that it can be adjusted and changed as needed.

JJA 13:34

Indeed, indeed. Phil Thompson.

J. Philip Thompson (JPT) 13:39

Yes.

JJA 13:42

Okay and Yesenia Mata?

Yesenia Mata (YM) 13:46

I approve.

JJA 13:47

Okay and then I'm gonna circle back to keeping If you'd like.

KB 13:56

I say yay.

JJA 13:59

Okay, and I approve as well. And this will be a living and breathing document that we will use and we will learn from. We will adapt as necessary, nothing is yet off the table but we do need to move forward. Good deal. Having done that and having registered that Darrick Hamilton is in opposite, does not agree. Appreciating that, we just need to make sure that that's noted in the record, and we will continue to work on this. We're now going to move to a presentation on the Charter and you will quickly see why it was important that we have a working framework to guide this effort so I am going to turn the meeting over at this time to the Mayor's Council, Kapil Longani, who has been tremendous in partnering with us from a very inception of this work of this tradition. You all gonna find him to be a most valuable resource, and so I'm just, I'm really thrilled to have him here and I appreciate you for coming to us after you stayed with us at the last meeting we didn't get to you, so thank you so very much and that turns to you.

Kapil Longani (KL) 15:21

Madam Chair, it's really a privilege, any opportunity to spend time with you and the Commission is really an honor, so I very much appreciate the time. For those of you who don't know me, my name is Kapil Longani, I'm Chief Counsel to the Mayor of New York City. I'm really excited to be

here because the first part of my career was spent implementing the South African constitution, which many consider the most progressive constitution in the world. In working with the original truth and reconciliation, members and staff, my team and I have been asked by the chair to serve as advisors to the Commission and in that role, we look forward to working with you on this historic journey and assisting in any way that the Chair and Vice Chair deem fit. Our presentation today is focused on a brief overview of the Charter. No doubt that you all will have lots of questions today and moving forward, but we wanted to give you a sense today of what your legal obligations are as members of the Charter Revision Commission, what you can do, and provide examples of how previous Charter Revision Commissions have taken ideas and turned them into referendum questions. And so without further ado, I'm going to, We're going to split this presentation in half. My Principal Deputy Counsel, Alexis, will be handling the first part and I'll be handling the second part so -- I want to introduce my brilliant colleague and one of the best and most creative lawyers in the entire city the Principal Deputy Counsel to the Mayor, Alexis Blane, who's going to take you through the Charter -- a nutshell process -- for a few minutes and then I'm going to come back to you to discuss a few examples of how prior Charter Revision Commissions have discharged their obligations. Alexis.

Alexis Blane (AB) 17:07

Thank you Kapil, and thank you Chair and members of the Commission. It's a privilege to be here with you and I look forward to continuing to talk to you about these issues and any other questions that you have in the future. I apologize for the mask but as you know, it is city workforce return to work day so --

Welcome to the bullpen where we are all wearing our KN95s to protect each other. Whoever is advancing the slides, if you could -- Yes, next slide please. Thank you. So we're gonna give you a lot of information.

Melanie, who presents after us, is going to give you a lot of information. This slide in a nutshell, is what I hope if you remember nothing else from our presentation, you'll take home with you. You have two roles -- We're going to focus today on your Charter Revision Commission role and the New York City Charter is a vehicle for realizing your work while acknowledging that your work is broader than that and that those roles will inform each other. So in a nutshell, when you are wearing your Charter Revision Commission hat, what are your roles and responsibilities? First, this slide says you're charged with reviewing the entire Charter -- we'll talk a little bit about what that means and the breadth it gives you to determine your own path forward. Second, you decide the scope, content and form of any proposed changes. Third, those proposed changes become ballot proposals, which go to the voters and in the end, the voters adopt or reject those changes -- that's the basic mechanism, that is the nutshell. Next slide please. So when it comes to the work that you're doing as a Charter Revision Commission, obviously it's focused around the Charter, the document itself -- which, like your framework is a living document. It's a hybrid document -- it sets out the structure, powers, and responsibilities of New York City's government, and it broadly defines the authority and responsibilities of city agencies and elected officials. But it leaves the details of the operations of city government to local laws and to agency rulemaking --

So why do we call it a hybrid document? The Charter includes state laws, it includes laws passed by the City Council, it includes the results of petitions and the proposals of many of the prior Charter Revision Commissions. So all of those things come together to form this framework, that like the Constitution of the United States, is a broad document that attempts to balance ideas and tension, and to strike that balance based on the democratic process, and the many Commissions that have gone before us. What are those things that are really, that the Charter holds together in tension and in balance? First, it tries to strike a balance between borough or community, autonomy and centralized city government, so we might think about this

as the continued existence of the Borough Presidents and Community Boards, while we have a centralized government in the Mayor and the City Council. Right, those Borough Presidents and Community Boards -- the Borough Presidents are directly elected, they have important responsibilities for aggregating the viewpoints of their constituents. But a lot of their power comes through modes of persuasion rather than the kind of more direct power that the Council has. Second, the Charter attempts to strike a balance between the Executive represented by the Office of the Mayor and the Legislative Branch as well as other elected officials like the Public Advocate, the Comptroller -- so for instance, the Comptroller has a role to audit all the financial affairs of the city. While it's the Mayor who sets out the city budget and the City Council who adopts it. Right, the Charter attempts to strike that balance to make sure there is oversight and democratic representation in the process. And also an Executive charge with carrying out the functions of city government. And then third, I think I would want to call to your attention the balance between government efficiency on the one hand and accountability and public participation on the other. The Charter compels the production of a lot of reports we may have varying views on whether anyone ever reads them. But it brings that information out into the public so the public can make informed choices about how its government works. It also provides in many places for the public to attend meetings of city bodies, deliberative city bodies, the city bodies that are making decisions about how to allocate resources and so the Charter really protects that public participation in the process while recognizing that you know you can't do everything by direct democracy in a city of eight point six million people. Next slide please.

AB 21:48

So that's what the Charter is. How does the Charter accomplish those goals? In general, it addresses three principal areas of city government. First, it contains instructions too, and descriptions of the city's elected officials -- So by way of example, it contains a chapter on the Office of the Mayor and it discusses, you know, the structures and functions of the Mayoral team. But it also includes sections on the Mayor's Office of Operations in the Mayor's Office of Criminal Justice right? Things that the Mayor is charged with doing or being responsible for. The second part, it contains key governmental operations and processes, things like the budget process, capital projects and procurement, you know, when it comes to the city's budget it describes those different responsibilities of the Mayor, the Council, the Director, management, and budget, the comptroller, to make sure that folks understand how those are allocated. And in the third part, it covers individual city agencies describing each agency's organization powers and duties -- so the Department of Sanitation, the Department of Citywide Administrative Services right? All those are creatures of the Charter. I harken back a little bit to that hybrid term I used before because I know the Charter isn't an exhaustive list of city agencies and the city doesn't have the same level of control over all of the agencies -- so for example, some agencies that are listed in the Charter like the Department of Education, are actually created pursuant to state law, and the city may have differing levels of ability to influence those agencies based on where their legal sort of origin is. But they appear here you know, and the Charter can speak to them in certain aspects. Next slide please. So when wearing your Charter Revision hat, what does that mean for you as a Commissioner? First, it means that you're empowered to propose changes to everything or nothing. As part of your charge to conduct a comprehensive review of the Charter, it means that your work is public through these meetings and through how you choose to report on your findings, and it means that you propose and shape the changes that will go before the voters, both by determining what you will target for change and by shaping how those changes come before the voters. So you will both have an opportunity to determine the content of a proposed change to the Charter, and to work with the Board of Elections to think about how to present that to the voters in a way that they can understand, digest and vote in an informed fashion. Next slide please. As you approach the Charter Revision, aspects of

your work, there are historical precedents for proposing both broad and narrow changes and we wanted to highlight that -- I think, to show you the breadth of what is possible and then the breadth of what is possible for this truly unique body that is, that we're before today. So some previous Commissions have taken a much focused approach to changes. They've changed the term limits for elected offices, they have both proposed and defined gun-free school zones but other Charter Revision Commissions have made wholesale changes that entirely altered the structure of city government. In 1936, they sort of formulated the Charter as we know it by separating out the administrative code, which contains a lot of the laws that deal with the day-to-day of how city agencies operate from the Charter, leaving it as more of a high level document that structures those relationships. And in 1989, the Charter Revision Commission, in what was essentially a single ballot question, abolished the old board of estimate structure of power within the city and established the Executive Legislative structure that we know today is the basis of our current city government right, so that's an enormous question that they chose to frame essentially as a single question. But then they also asked additional questions that focused on very specific processes including things like a fair share planning requirement to ensure that the burdens and benefits of city facilities were distributed equitably among the communities of the city. So that precedent gives you broad latitude to define your approach to the Charter, and we hope it is helpful for giving you, as you approach through this framework, a sense of the real opportunity that is before you in this unique moment. And so now I'm going to hand it over to Kapil to speak more about previous Charter Revision Commissions and how their work might provide useful examples to guide you as you go forward.

KL 26:20

Thank you, Alexis. If we can go to the next slide please. The next two slides that I'm going to show you are examples of prior Charter Revision Commissions organized into categories like political processes or resource allocation, and we've color coded each of these examples -- the red represents power, blue represents access, and green represents opportunity -- and let me just say before we go to the next slide that these categories of course, and their classification as being representative of power, access, and opportunity are not exclusive. Some of these examples clearly fall within multiple buckets. Next slide please. So let's talk about, as you can see here, we've got four categories that summarize some of the work of prior Charter Revision Commissions. Let's talk about political processes. For example, we've got three other categories here, of course creating new entities, budget, and redefining roles -- these four buckets are common mechanisms that Charter Revision Commissions have used in the past to implement their ideas. Let's talk about a couple of power examples. In 2019, As many of you know, ranked choice voting was approved by the voters, as was giving advice and consent to the Council regarding the appointment of the Corporation Council. Prior to that, the appointment of the Corporation Council was within the sole authority of the Mayor of New York City. Let's talk a little bit about opportunity. A good example of opportunity is in the second category, creating new entities.

In 1989, the Charter Revision Commission put on the ballot the creation of the Office of Economic and Financial Opportunity otherwise known as New York City Opportunity, and the voters approved it. The New York or the Office of Economic and Financial Opportunity's goal was to enhance the ability of MWBEs to compete for city contracts. The office itself was established to conduct educational programs, provide technical assistance, and report on efforts to increase MWBE participation. A couple examples of access on this chart include the budget reforms from 1975. During that budget reform, the Charter Revision Commission limited Mayoral power by requiring new funds to be appropriated by providing the opportunity for legislative veto of certain transfers of funds within agencies and increase the freedom of agencies to administer their own budgets. They also added provisions designed to further

community involvement in an access to budget process. And then finally, I'll give you another quick example from the redefining roles category, which is to your far right on this chart. In 2010, the Voter Assistance Commission was reconstituted by the Charter Revision Commission and approved by referendum. The reconstitution involved reducing by as much as half the number of petition signatures required for candidates for city offices to appear on the ballot. The reconstitution of the sixteen-member Voter Assistance Commission as a nine-member Voter Assistance Advisory Committee, and generally transferred voter assistance functions, including the appointment of the Voter Assistance Coordinator, to the Campaign Finance Board. Next slide. Thank you. Here are a few more examples. Different buckets again and I'll talk just about a couple of them here because I think you're all getting the idea. In 2001, the public voted affirmatively to authorize rules to protect the confidentiality of New Yorker's immigration status when they accessed city services. In 2018, the voters approved Borough Presidents seeking out persons of diverse backgrounds and making appointments to community boards, and I'm going to talk a little bit more detail about that. You could also see under the bucket of resource allocation. We used examples of Euler and community role in planning processes as well as the fair share framework for citing city facilities which was something that was established in 1989. Those were rules that established the criteria for the location of new city facilities and the significant expansion, closing, or significant reduction in size or capacity for service delivery of existing facilities.

KL 31:23

Let's talk a little bit, I know the Vice Chair, the Chair, and I have talked a little bit about accountability, so I wanted to make sure we included a little bit about that as well, and sort of, some provisions in the Charter that sort of gave teeth to the goals that the provisions sought, so you know this really is about answering the question of how do we make sure our proposed changes are implemented effectively and meaningfully. One way to do that -- A good example here is if an agency doesn't do what they're required to do, take away that power and give it to another entity to meet the goals set out by the provision. So Here's an example -- If the Charter, if the Campaign Finance Board determines that the budget does not include sufficient funds to create a voter guide, OMB can transfer funds to CFB without appropriation. Another example of checks and balances is the provision in Charter Section 803 C1, which requires the Department of Investigation to publicly publish annual audit reports regarding NYPD's use of surveillance technology. You know, the obviously, the idea of there being -- You know, if you had given NYPD that mandate, perhaps they may or may not have done that. There is no such thing as a Charter jail by giving DOI, an oversight entity, the authority to do so. The odds of that report being published, the Charter Revision Commission felt were higher. Next slide, now we're going to take look at a couple of case studies that are going to take you from initial idea to referendum question -- so case study number one, the problem here was, and this is from the 2001 Commission, the problem in case study one was how to give CCHR the City Commission on Human Rights some teeth. Right, at that time in 2001, it didn't have Charter status and the Commission was concerned that it didn't have sufficient oversight or enforcement power, and could be too easily eliminated or their power is too easily curtailed. So the solution proposed was to codify the CCHR in the Charter and give it rulemaking authority, like other Charter agencies in order to interpret the human rights law. The Charter-based resolution provided that the CCHR would become a Charter Agency and require that it enforce the city of human rights law. Let's take a look at the actual provision -- could we go to the next slide please. There we go, thank you. As you can see, the question is fairly simple, the idea was a somewhat complicated one and here, it's being distilled into a question for the voters -- shall the City Charter be amended to make the Human Rights Commission a Charter Agency to protect civil rights? And the answer was by the public was, yes it should, and

so it is now a part of the Charter and it is codified in the Charter. So let's go ahead and move to case study two. Sorry, I can't see. There we go, in case study two, the problem was a lack of diversity on community boards and this harkens back to the 2018 Charter Revision Commission. The problem here was repeated reappointment of the same community board members had resulted in community boards that lack diversity, so the Charter Revision Commission thought about potential solutions and they came up with term limits and the requirement that Borough Presidents seek out persons of diverse backgrounds and making appointments to the community boards. On the next slide, please take a look at how that question was actually formulated on the ballot.

KL 35:29

So in so in substance, it says that this proposal would amend the City Charter to impose term limits and require Borough Presidents to seek out persons of diverse backgrounds and making appointments to community boards. It also added new application and reporting requirements related to these appointments and shall the proposal be adopted, the answer was yes, and if you wonder well how did that actually make it into the Charter, what was the actual language, well wonder no more -- the actual language says and I quote "The Borough President shall seek out persons of diverse backgrounds including with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability status, sexual orientation, language and other characteristics the Borough President deems relevant to promoting diversity and inclusion of underrepresented groups and communities within community boards to apply for appointment community boards, civic groups, and other community groups. And neighborhood associates may submit nominations to the Borough President and to council members." So that's how it was. If you open up your Charter and go to section 2800, that's how you'll see, that's how this ballot question and the idea of diversifying these boards manifested itself in the Charter itself. And now if we can go to the last slide please. Or the second, the penultimate slide. On case study three, here in 2019, the CRC addressed how CCRB could investigate material fault statements made by police officers during the course of a CCRB investigation. The proposed solution was to expand their jurisdiction. The Police Department was found, had obviously always had jurisdiction but didn't impose discipline to the extent that many of the Commissioners felt it should and therefore, the solution was to allow CCRB to make these investigations to do these investigations themselves and change the Charter provision governing CCRB's jurisdiction to allow CCRB to investigate false material statements made by police officers during the course of an investigation. And if we could flip to the final slide, and here you go, this was the actual language used this was the actual question that was posed to the voters. This proposal would amend the City Charter to allow the CCRB to investigate the truthfulness of any material statement that is made within the course of the CCRB's investigation or resolution of a complaint by a police officer who is the subject of that complaint and recommend discipline against the police officer where appropriate shall this proposal be adopted, and the answer was yes. So I hope this gives all of you a brief but you know, at least somewhat interesting introduction to the Charter itself and how your work or how other Charter Revision Commissions have approached the work that you all are about to embark upon. And I believe next in line is my Colleague, Melanie who's going to talk to you a little bit about Chapter 68.

Melanie Ash (MA) 38:52

Thank you, Kapil.

AV 38:54

Sorry I just want to know, I think Jennifer --

JJA 38:56

I'm sorry, I just first want to thank you, Kapil and Alexis for the presentation and before we move to Melanie, I just want to, should Melanie speak first or should we entertain some questions or comments from the Commission about the Charter itself? Is there a reason that we should jump to Melanie first or can we have conversation? I'm just, I want an opinion on this –

AV 39:22

I think we can do questions right now.

JJA 39:25

Okay, all right then. Melanie, if you would just give the Commission a few minutes to, just you know, respond to what's been presented to kick us off. I want to take us back to the slide where you summarize the wholesale versus specific changes, the approach, so if you can take us back there -- and the reason I want to go back here, and I want to just kind of park here for a few minutes is

JJA 40:02

because you know one of the next decisions that we have to make as a Charter is the approach that we're going, we've got a framework but we've got to make a decision about how we're going to approach the actual review of the Charter and the changes that we will seek. This is a situation where we're not coming in with a foregone conclusion that we have to look at a specific issue or a specific area per say, although there are specific concerns that we have. It is my opinion at this point that the nature of our work is really wholesale. We want to dive into the Charter and look at how systemic racism is propped up by the structural laws of the city of New York. When it comes to you know, decision making, city agency operations and with respect to who's able to do what and who is able to take advantage of what the city has to offer -- so it's not to say that there aren't going to be specific changes that we seek with respect to certain government agencies or to specific boards or decision making authorities, but I do, at this point I believe that it's really kind of a wholesale approach to looking at this because systemic racism may be, you know, kind of hiding up under any one of these, in any one of these sections and so I just want to pause there for a moment. I want to hear some of your thinking about that Kapil and Alexis, and then I want to hear some of the other Commission members' thoughts about that.

AB 42:04

Thank you. Yeah, I think what we really wanted to emphasize here was that, you know you have a mandate to review the entire Charter and Commissions have approached this in many different ways in the past and have used their staff very differently I think, to support them in that endeavor. But if your desire really is to apply your framework to the Charter, then I think if we take a look at past history, that is very possible a lot of times folks have found, I think, as in previous Charter Vision Commissions that as they proceed through some of the initial public engagement and some of the initial considerations about what their mandate is, it allows them to develop focus, but that focus has often been much broader than what the final ballot questions end up being. So I think the point we wanted to emphasize here is that the world is your oyster. If the world is defined as the Charter and that your definition of any particular approach need not constrain the work as you go forward, I think it goes back to the idea of a living document in the framework you've adopted, that this process is a living and iterative process, and that you continue to have full control of it as you move forward and to take in the information that you get as you go through your public engagement and do your own work in different areas and bring your considerable lived and studied experience to the table, and that

you have a significant amount of leeway to shape that in any way that you see fit to communicate with the voters at the end of this process.

KL 43:45

Yeah and I would just add to that Madam Chair -- Look, this, what you're embarking on is really a unique journey. I mean you are, you've established a goal that no other Charter Revision Commission has set forth. It is, you are doing something that is truly historic and I think you're not going to follow a cookie-cutter approach, and you're going to, this Charter Revision Commission is going to establish its own unique path. That being said, the point of this was really to say you can, your ambition and your thought process in terms of potentially doing something that affects the Charter wholesale is something that has been done before not frequently but, it has been done before and the Commission should take heart in that and know that while it was not easy, there were major changes made in the past and those changes have survived the test of time, and so I think again Madam Chair, you've challenged everyone including us to really think outside of the box here and we're going to be going you know, traveling with you on this journey and we're going to be doing things that frankly haven't been done before, and I think that's actually really exciting.

JJA: So do I. Thank you. I see that Henry has his hand raised. So Henry, you want to come on in?

HG: Yes, Kapil, of the many proposals the Charter Revision Commission has made in the last say 20 years or so how many of them have been adopted, and how many of them generally have been rejected by the public.

KL 45:37

Yeah, Vice Chair I don't believe and I know we've got Kwame and Melanie on as well, I don't believe a provision has been rejected. I don't believe a single one that was a question I had and I believe I asked it last year, and I think the answer is none but if any of my colleagues on, believe that I'm incorrect, please say something.

Kwame Akosah (KA) 46:08

Hi, this is Kwame Akosah from the Law Department. There may have been multiple examples but the only one that comes to mind is a proposal to adopt non-partisan voting for local elections in New York City. I believe that was put to the voters in 2010 and was, sorry it might have been 2010 and 2003, but it was rejected by the voters.

KL 46:32

Right, thanks Kwame.

JJA 46:34

Okay, well that's good to know in case there's anybody rejects ours, we won't be the first. That was a joke that was a joke. That's not the plan here -- Are there other questions? Ana?

AB 46:50

Less of a question than a thought. I mean, I suppose we could just pour through the whole thing you know, section by section kind of thing and then have discussions about, you know, where is structural racism lurking. You know right in each of those, or another option is to have a discussion among the Commissioners, the Commission members sorry, about where do we already think that structural reason is lurking and then see what the Charter says about it in you

know, all those things because you know, one can think of certainly from birth to you know forward, there are plenty of structures in the city and policies in the city that come from those structures that you know, start if you will, the ball rolling in the wrong direction for a lot of people. And so those are just some thoughts because having started reading it and you know, becoming overwhelmed with the level of detail you know, it can be, I think we're gonna need to be very strategic given the amount of time we have about how we tackle those issues anyway. Those are just some thoughts.

JJA 48:09

Yeah, on it. Excellent points and I'll tell you that. Kapil and I have even talked about that, about this very issue, this very challenge. My thinking is that it's going to be the process, the way that we're going to be able to do this is one, hearing from the community hearing from Commission members hearing from people, you know, experts in different places and spaces from around the country -- just information that will open up our ears and then cause us to go looking in the Charter to see you know, how the issues that are presented really speak to or how they are or how they are addressed or not addressed in the Charter. In addition what I have asked Kapil and Alexis to do is also, they are very familiar with the Charter, having a sense of what it is we are seeking to do here for them to also you know, work with us and help us to identify places and spaces, issues in the Charter clauses that you know once they hear what we're talking about, help us to center. I do believe that there are going to be some overarching structural changes and then there will be some specific areas that we want to tackle you know, directly and speak directly to -- that's my thinking. But it is a gigantic undertaking and that's in part why we're trying to get, like have a framework to jump into it so that we can have an approach and then we can use that as a lens and frame for hearing people, hearing ourselves and then looking into the Charter, and working with our General Counsel, and then also some attorneys that are on loan to us to really help us do this. Darrick.

DH 50:18

So my query is around the example of Federal Presidents being charged with diversifying community boards, and the question relates to thinking about effectiveness of proposed changes, so how effective was that proposed change? Is there any indication of Whether it worked, didn't work?

KL 50:43

Yeah it's a great question. I don't know, Deputy Mayor Thompson, if you have thoughts on that, I can find out. I will take a look at it and I will come back to you. I don't have an answer Darrick, but I will come back to you on that. It's a great question.

DH 51:00

Yeah, I mean the source of the question does really get at the issue of accountability. 100 percent.

JJA 51:12

I echo, when I say it's a great question, I'm going to tell you that when I actually saw that example, my first thought was just because the Borough President makes the decision doesn't mean that you're now actually ensured, you know, real access because the way, especially given the way that it is written, it's like the Board Borough President has the ascension -- I can't remember the exact wording.

AB 51:38

Yes

JJA 51:40

Because the Borough President you know now has this authority to decide what representation looks like.

AB 51:42

Well, actually not even that far Jennifer, it just shall seek out doesn't mean shall I work and so those I have the same reaction Darrick, about, you know both like, is that really happening or not, like where's the closing of the loop, if you will. Right, same with all these reports that are in the Charter, and we're content in you know, maybe this is too strong a term, but burying them somewhere that the public has no real access, no meaningful access to -- Oh, sure, they're on some online portal, but who's going to sit and as opposed to having these other more public rituals and transparency rituals that reach the populace for the accountability piece -- Darrick's point, sorry Darrick, I didn't mean to cut you off.

DH: So listen, this is useful. I mean, and then I guess I'm gonna, at the risk of being somewhat redundant but really to drive home the point you know, another I think perhaps another framing would be if the Borough Presidents or the Boards themselves were charged as being indicative of demographic representation of the city, and to me I would see that in the bucket of equity

JJA 52:58

and I'll just go one step further and I'll say to you Darrick that just the example that you provided, whether we're, let me just pause and say, whether we're talking about equity or we're talking about access, we're talking about opportunity, one of the things that I am interested in is whether or not there we should have proposals that are not just you know, related to the Borough President and the community board. But you know all appointments have to be you know, all appointments to Boards, Commissions, and the like have to have demographic representation and that would be an example of where you're looking at a structural change that is across the board.

KL 53:42

Madam Chair, we can come back to the board either later tonight or no later than early tomorrow with an answer to that great question.

JJA 53:51

Okay,

KL 53:52

and we'll come back with objective data just to show you the results of the, of that ballot question and how it's manifested itself in real life.

JJA 54:01

Very helpful. Lurie.

LDF 54:07

Yes, hi. Just in picking up on the line of conversation that we were just having, when I look back at the graph that shows the in a nutshell, the voters adopt or reject seems to be the end point for our participation but this line of questioning from Commissioner Hamilton raises for me questions about accountability, enforceability, after the moment that the voters have voted and I

didn't see anything that came after that particular action where the voters are either adopting or rejecting the concern or the suggestions of the Commission. How are we thinking about accountability throughout this process if our participation in framing it, really does it end with the voters' elections?

JJA 54:59

Yes so I, I cannot remember if in the last presentation the last public meetings presentation, I truly can't remember if there was any reference to capacity and accountability.

AV 55:16

There was,

JJA 55:17

there was. Okay, in some earlier conversations what we've talked about is that we may also look to incorporate into our ballot proposals these concepts of accountability and capacity, a concern that sometimes change will be sought and it'll come through in a valid proposal but if you're not addressing the fact and this, Darrick, gets a little bit to this -- this notion of and, and what we heard from some of the Commission members last week, and then what we also heard in the responses given by many of the Commission members, what is true meaningful opportunity? There may be a, there may be access on the books and you know we may have policies that say you know, everybody you know can or you know, like public schools, quality public schools are available to everybody, everybody has access to -- I'm just using this as an example -- the specialized schools and the tests, but is that true meaningful opportunity? And so one of the things that Commissioner Phil Thompson and I believe Commissioner Henry Garrido spoke to in earlier conversations, is this importance of centering on --how do we make sure that we also are building capacity, to really be able to engage and not have structural changes or specific changes that are put in place, that are really there on paper alone but people can't really avail themselves of their opportunity because the playing field is already so unequal. So that's the capacity piece, wanting to incorporate that. And then secondly, also centering on what we can do by way of accountability in these structural changes -- you know, enforcement, not just there is a, I'm just using this as an example, the city of New York right now has in the Charter several reports that are to be you know, that are to be updated annually to give an accounting, and for better than 20 years, I mean I can speak to some of them that have never been provided. Right, so they're intended to be an accountability mechanism but they haven't really been responded to -- so we as a Charter Commission should be looking at what are the enforcement mechanisms? You know, I've asked the question, can you attach budget authority to some of these accountability mechanisms if the city is not doing x -- do they then you know, does some of their budget authority and responsibility you know, get passed to the public advocate or some other entity? I'm just talking out of my head right now but you know, I think you get where I'm going. We do need to have both and so, and Henry and Phil hit on that early on, but I realized it might have been early on when I was talking just about the formation but we'll come back to that, we'll make sure that's a big piece so thank you for raising that. I think we have another question or a comment from Henry.

KL 58:25

Madam Chair by the way, that was something that the original CRC focused a great deal on was the accountability element as you know, so it's your focus is from a historic perspective -- what a great consequence.

JJA 58:38

Yeah thank you.

HG 58:40

I think about what's happening right now in this moment and I think that one of the concerns that I had raised from earlier on, from the onset was the fact that we wanted to make sure that we didn't want to come up with a report that sits on somebody's desk or a shelf and not have actionable item, but I do think it's worth noting that some of the past Commission revision proposals have been more aspirational in nature and well-intended but have hidden roadblocks or worse -- not necessarily somebody thwarting the implementation of the ideas, but that in fact there are other things that change right? We live in a changing world. You know if nothing else COVID has shown us that that's something that we completely, unexpected can't change upside down. And I think about minority-owned businesses, proposals that were loftier and lofty and worthwhile pursuing and when you start setting up percentages for those, you know how much you know you try you push, you get as close to that number as possible. But is it a failure for going from two percent to ninety percent for instance, as opposed to twenty you know, percent of minority owned business where you say, well we didn't actually reach our goal but we make significant progress from going in the single digits so as close to 20 as possible and I think we ought to be cognizant of the fact that some of these proposals that we're making --if we are really true we'll be aspirational goal and that, I'm not suggesting we're going to set ourselves to failure -- we absolutely want to meet and exceed expectation but I think some of it is measuring the progress made and not necessarily on reaching a particular benchmark because if we are talking about racial equity, you know we are not going to raise decades of institutionalized inequities and racism that I have seen my experience with one Commission. Sorry folks, I want us to do well and I want us to do you know, extremely well actually but I think we need to have some, you know, some reasonable expectations of the things that are going to be there. And if we're going to push, envelope the, envelope far enough, we need to expect some of those things are going to be hard to achieve. If we are able to achieve every single thing that we put in on this Charter Revision, then I would have to question, did we go far enough question enough, did we put it hard enough and I think that that's the way I'm approaching this from the perspective of you know how much we're going to achieve on the upcoming proposals. Thank you.

JJA: Fair and on point. I'm looking through the names and the participants. I don't see any other hands that have been raised

Rev FD: so, Jennifer. I've sort of done the old-fashioned route, this is Fred actually,

but I just like to reinforce the notion of accountability and sort of ballpark if you will, our parking lot I think they call it, sort of the idea of an ongoing oversight and enforcement entity -- at least the Commissioner or Deputy Mayor level with their records, requisite staff and resources to monitor DEI related activity particularly as proposed by this Commission over a given period of time or permanently. But I think if there isn't, so well, if I can join analogy between the CCRB and the NYPD you know, for as many challenges as the CCRB has, it is still an ongoing permanent entity of accountability for the NYPD, unlike any other in the nation I think for DEI work however, we ultimately describe it and call whatever we ultimately call it you need a similar -- I would propose that we consider a similar or our agency just conceptually with again the resources that it needs to do its job that has responsibility for monitoring not only the recommendations that come out of this Commission that may be approved in the Charter but other things that it can set in terms of targets and goals for agencies as well.

JJA 1:03:29

I really I appreciate that and I want you to know that I think that, I believe that Henry and Phil also have expressed, you know, similar thoughts, so I think you were in good company.

Rev. Fred Davie (Rev FD) 1:03:48

Right right

JJA 1:03:49

that was good too. Are there others?

KB 1:03:51

I'm in trouble chair, raising my hands as I'm driving.

JJA 1:03:55

Hi, come on in.

KB 1:03:57

Hey with your permission, just very briefly, I love the sentiment just expressed about you know longevity, legacy, accountability, I think that was beautifully put and I'm here, I'm looking forward to more of the brainstorm. This was great, this introduction to the Charter. I know there'll be more piercing questions, specifics around Charter Revisions passed and gone, there have been some great questions so far, but I'm here to to push us and myself to be out my comfort zone so I'm interested in radical revolutionary transformation, and so even in the naming and the mission and the vision of this particular Commission. I knew it would be a lot of work, I knew it would take a lot emotionally, spiritually, meant to be here, but I'm happy I'm here because of those words I just said -- radical revolutionary transformation.

JJA 1:04:56

Very helpful, very helpful and I will just submit to you that that again for me, is why I think that you know it is both wholesale you know and that there will be moments where it will be specific to a specific, you know issue or agency, but the whole salt comes when you're just really trying to up in these structural barriers that cut across all the entire city government and all who engage with it so I'm completely on board with other comments.

JY 1:05:35

Jennifer. Sorry, Jo-Ann. So I really appreciate what everybody's saying and I think I just want to add my pile on here that you know what I'm thinking about as I'm watching the slides is ultimately how will we measure success? Right, technically as a Charter we're going to measure success as we're going to come up with these recommendations right -- it's going to be very mechanical and like administrative, but I think ultimately our work is not just about you know, coming up the recommendations -- it's about how are we going to create a living, breathing document and a process that is going to outlive and outlast all of us, and so you know, I do think about an enforcement mechanism and you know, and the accountability is really important right, because after we do our work and then we step back, how about we make sure that that's going to be done, how do we know that somebody's not going to say this is a very nice Commissioner and then just put it away right? That's not what we really need here and so yeah, I think some type of, how will we make sure that this continues to move forward long after this Commission is no more, I think that's a really, it's something that I'm thinking a lot about.

JJA: Excellent, excellent points, and in this appreciation that it's -- we've seen in government before you can have accountability offices, but if they don't have any teeth by way of really being able to enforce the changes that are necessary, then it gets us but so far so we just kind of like have to hold that all these truths -- as kind of truths, if you will for this Commission in the work, or to make our work live long beyond the time that we're together. Any other questions? Comments? Thoughts? Ana?

AB 1:07:25

I do, yeah, I have a question actually -- This is for Kapil and the law team -- so in looking and just to make sure you know, I understand all the ways in which the Charter can be amended right -- Some of it, City Council passed right, but so is anything we do -- Does everything have to go to the voters? So for example one thing that the Charter does a very good job of, not necessarily using a pronoun for the Mayor except in a couple of places that says "He" right? And you know this is not in the race equity you know, and in the racism sphere, but it's in the sexism sphere right? So just a little example like so to change that does that have to get you know, like is that something that's even within our scope or not? So anyway, just to make sure that understanding that the, whatever we do has to go to ballot or are there other ways to affect the Charter that does not, from this Commission that does not have to go to the voters --

AB 1:08:44

so I'll take that one, so yes everything is within your ambit and everything has to go to the voters -- but what that means is if you wanted to put before the voters just, the Charter shall use all gender neutral pronouns right, like we could just adopt "they" for instance throughout the Charter, you could make that proposal -- you don't have to have the voters vote on each instance or each elected official instance or anything like that. The only thing you really can't change are the things that come directly from state law which would require obviously a state law change.

AB 1:09:19

Thank you,

JJA 1:09:21

Good deal. Are there other questions? Comments? Okay, more discussion certainly to be had but really appreciate all that the Commissioners have added to this conversation and again, just can't thank you, Kapil and Alexis enough and I'm just feeling very grateful and all the more confident that we're going to do what needs to be done having you on board with us, so thank you. The first of many conversations that we as a Commission will have with you. Thanks so very much.

KL 1:09:57

Thank you, Madam Chair.

JJA 1:10:03

Thank you. We're going to turn to our General Counsel Melanie Ash, who will walk us through Chapter 68, Conflicts of Interest.

MA 1:10:17

Thank you very much Madam Chair. I think we're going to +

AV 1:10:19

Melanie, I'm just pulling up your slide, hold on, let me slide up on the screen, yeah.

MA 1:10:23

Great. So one of the things we wanted to do here is, because it fits within, you know, the subject matter of today which is the Charter -- we wanted to walk you through some of the important principles of Conflict of Interest that are found in the Charter. And you know, we know that some members of the Commission are public servants and so are probably familiar with these rules for others they may not and so given their importance we want to make sure we highlight them for you just generally here and give you a little bit of background so Chapter 68 of the Charter establishes ethical standards and conflict of interest rules that apply to current and former public servants. The guiding principle underlying Chapter 68 is really the fact that public service is a public trust. The prohibitions that are set out in Chapter 68 on the conduct of public servants are entitled, intended, and enacted to preserve the trust that the public places in public servants. to promote public confidence in government to promote the integrity of government decision-making and to enhance government efficiency -- so to that end, these rules are about preventing actual conflict of interest but also the appearance of conflict of interest so that the public can have trust in its public servants and because serving as a Commissioner constitutes public service, the Chapter 68 applies to you as you're in your role as Commissioners, so just to highlight a few key points under Chapter 68, you may not use your Racial Justice Commission position to derive a benefit for yourself or anyone with whom you are associated, and associated generally means your spouse, your domestic partner, your child, your parent, your sibling, a business partner or other financial relationship and firms in which you have an interest so, the second point on here you cannot have an interest in a firm doing business with the Racial Justice Commission and again an interest means an ownership interest -- doing business has to do with you know, contracting with the city. I want to highlight one thing though -- it's important that you hear that this, realized relates to doing business with the Commission because Commissioners are not regular city employees. Chapter 68 doesn't prohibit them from having an interest in a firm doing business with some other city agency so if your employer outside of your Commission work does business with the city with some other agency, that's not prohibited by Chapter 68; however your business, your employer, cannot do business with the Commission itself -- so that's an important distinction. And it wouldn't, also wouldn't prevent your business your employer from appearing before any other city agency. You cannot participate in the preparation of submissions or testimony to the Commission by any organization you're affiliated with, so if your organization is would like to testify before the Commission you have to be completely recused from the development of that testimony and the delivery of that testimony. After the testimony has been presented, you may review the testimony and you may discuss it in your role as a Commissioner. The next one is you may not request from anyone directly or indirectly a political contribution for any candidate for city elected office or any city official running for any elected office. So while you may personally donate, you may not fundraise for any of those candidates. I do want to highlight also it's not on the screen but the duty of confidentiality -- Chapter 68 requires that you not disclose any confidential information that you receive in connection with your work here that is not, that is obtained as a result of your public duties, but it's not otherwise available to the public -- so just be sensitive to the potential that there's confidential information that may come to you in your role and you have to preserve that confidentiality. I think what I really want to highlight for you is it's very fact specific, whether or not there's a conflict whether or not there's an appearance of conflict, it's very fact specific and so I would urge you to if you have any question about it, if you're not sure, to seek advice or guidance before you take any action or engage in any conduct. It's always better to ask in advance and get clarity and we have resources that we can make available to you -- the Conflict of Interest Board provides opinions, advisory guidance, if you wait until after there's potential --

obviously to be reprimanded in some way, and there's no there's no need to wait until after you can bring those questions forward -- we can get advice for you relatively quickly and help you to guide your actions from in that way so they're consistent with the obligations of the Charter Chapter 68. So that's really all I wanted to highlight -- please feel free to reach out with any questions to the Executive Director or myself and we can make sure that we get you the advice and guidance that you need.

JJA 1:16:07

Okay, thank you. Thank you. Melanie are there any questions for Melanie at this time? Okay, I don't see any hands raised -- I appreciate you walking us through this Melanie and what you're doing and you're doing so also reminds me that we should put on the next meeting -- put on the agenda for the next meeting a presentation/discussion about the conduct overall of a Commission member. What's coming to mind right now is that as we begin to engage in community and have conversations with community members, experts, people that just want to know more about the Commission we need to have a shared understanding of the rules of engagement -- said differently or just to be more specific, can any member talk with the media at any time about anything you know, but before the Commission, what can and cannot be said is clearance required? If Commission members are talking to community members or to experts, is that an official Commission conversation and what are the rules attending to that -- so we need some guidance about that and it would be good to have that at the next meeting so that we're all hearing at the same time and can ask questions.

MA 1:17:48

Okay, we're happy to work -- the staff will work on getting you a presentation and we can follow up with you on specific things that you would like us to cover in terms of content.

JJA 1:17:58

Good deal, good deal.

AV 1:17:59

And I think we can share things via email before the next meeting as well since I know some of you may be receiving requests, you may have folks reaching out to you we want to make sure you have that information as soon as possible.

JJA 1:18:12

Excellent point, but we will do it at the meeting so everybody gets all of the same information and to Anusha's point not on both if you are receiving questions and you just want to raise them with us, share them with us, but also if you have questions about this very issue, sending them in advance of the meeting would be very helpful, so we can make sure we capture them and we address them. One other point I just want to make, we are at the end of our meeting I think it's been a good meeting, very good meeting. I want to implore you all to check your emails regularly -- the Charter email you know perhaps maybe at least twice a week would be helpful. We will reach out to you via phone or text if there is something that we need you to take a look at and respond to so we will make it a point to do that --but just check from time to time so that you don't miss anything because we're trying not to bombard you with too many emails, but we want to make sure that you are kept current. We're going to, we have not yet set the next meeting -- it will be in the next week or two weeks. Now we're looking at schedules, we're trying to coordinate -- we also want to be able at that time to present to you a schedule of meetings for the next several months. I just roll them out to you, Anusha and her team, Executive Director Venkataraman and her team are working up the schedule of meetings, beginning to map out the

community engagement strategy and how we are going to orchestrate those meetings, coordinate and orchestrate them as we've talked about, before we're going to have meetings with experts in the field people and experts defined as people with --you know, learned experience, whether it be experiential, formal, or practical, you know practice -- practitioners, we're going to have conversations with those persons. We're going to talk to city agency leaders and staff, we also are going to talk to people from other sectors, and your engagement and your thoughts matter as well. I want you all to know that if, as you know, as you're working through, as you're thinking about your role, if there are issues that are percolating in your minds, make sure you send them to us via email, to the Charter email so we can have them and as Fred has done, create the parking lot and even begin to work on some of them through this framework, so you don't have to hold back and wait to be asked what your thoughts are. Begin feeding them to us now, we're on a tight time frame, and so the more information we have and the more work that we can do to make sure that we're incorporating your thoughts and your perspective sooner rather than later. That'll be helpful to us in the immediate and in the long term so again, working on scheduled meetings, full Commission meetings beginning in June will likely be monthly. There is not an expectation that every community engagement meeting, that every Commission member will beat those meetings because we're expecting, we're going to have quite a few -- I'm talking about you know, in the, tens you know, maybe you know that we could have more than 50 community engagement meetings when all of this is done, so there isn't an expectation that you will be at every single one of them but that's why we want to get you a schedule, a sense of like kind of how we're going to lay these out so you can plan in advance. I'm going to bring this meeting to a close but before I do, I just want to see if there are any members of the Commission or the staff that have any questions, any things that you'd like us to focus on in the next little while -- just want to make sure we capture your thoughts before we close out the meeting.

AB 1:22:22

Yeah, I just want to say thank you for clarifying that about the meetings because I was fretting like if we're meeting once a month, like how are we going to get all the input that we need to get -- so that's great, so there'll be tons of meetings, we go to as many as we can and we as a Commission meet once a month

JJA 1:22:39

Correct

AB 1:22:40

Process, everything, distill stuff that has been provided from, didn't go to and all that. Okay, great

JJA 1:22:47

Absolutely.

AB 1:22:48

I appreciate that

JY 1:22:50

I had a question -- so I got an email from somebody about you know, some of the, here's what we'd like for you to look at in this Commission -- and I haven't responded so I think it'd be really helpful to figure out what is a response. I haven't responded, you know, don't respond to people I don't know and so, but I think it'd be great if we can get some guidance and I also wanted to

thank Melanie because I sent her an email earlier because you know, some of the work that we've been doing has been very highly visible and I need it, you know, and then there's a lot of candidates asking questions and saying you know can you come with me and can you discuss this with me, and so I did have to throw a question to say can I participate if it's for my regular work and she was you know, the answer I got an answer within like five minutes and so I just am very appreciative of how quick they've been able to help out, so thank you.

JJA 1:23:51

Excellent, excellent. That's good to hear. Thank you, thank you Jo-Ann. Here's a thought that I have in response to Jo-Ann's question and concern – so my, what I would like is when you receive these types of requests to forward them to Anusha and you know the team on the whole can respond to them additionally. I think that it would be good if Melanie and Anusha would craft a, just a formal general response that you as a Commission member can respond so that people know that you are responding to them, letting them know that you've received the communication and the inquiry that, your inquiry is being forwarded to the Commission, you know, to the Commission Executive Director and just you know, thanking them for their response, something along those lines. So we'll right now, we'll play it as Anusha or the Commission itself will respond directly to the entity on the substance of the inquiry but will also create for you like, just a formal general response that as Commission members, you can send out.

AV 1:25:12

Absolutely, we can do that and provide that to you and you know, I think in time there will be ample opportunity to engage directly with organizations and groups as well as through our public engagement -- we just want to make sure that we're prepared and organized entering into that and that we have an equitable approach since we will be receiving so many requests and meetings, we want to make sure that we're fairly hearing from everyone that we need to around the city.

JJA 1:25:46

Good deal. So yeah

AV 1:25:48

and one thing I wanted to mention for members of the public that are listening in, I just want to reiterate where you can go to find updates on the Commission including upcoming meetings once they're scheduled -- we're posting those at least 72 hours in advance as required by open meetings law. Go to nyc.gov/charter if you have any comments or questions, we do have an email set up -- you can email racialjustice@charter.nyc.gov

JJA 1:26:23

Very good. So I don't see any questions that are raised, I think that we've addressed the questions that have been put before the Commission and the staff. I want to thank you all for another productive meeting and I'm going to adjourn the meeting and wish you all a good night. The meeting is formally adjourned. Good night

All 1:26:51

Good night, good night everybody. Good night.