

CITY OF LUDINGTON – CHARTER COMMISSION

Frequently Asked Questions

At the upcoming May 3, 2022 Special Election, you will see ballot proposals regarding the City of Ludington Charter to vote on. Below you will find some frequently asked questions as they pertain to the Charter Commission.

Q: Who may serve as a Charter Commissioner?

A: Any registered voter in the City of Ludington (except city officers and/or employees, whether elected or appointed) who has resided in the City for at least three (3) years may run for the office of charter commissioner.

Q: How do I seek nomination?

A: By submitting to the City Clerk a nominating petition signed by 40 registered electors of the city. Please contact the City Clerk for petition forms.

Q: What is the deadline for filing a petition for the Charter Commission offices that will be on the ballot for the May 3, 2022 special election?

A: 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 18, 2022.

Q: What is the deadline for filing as a “write-in” candidate for the Charter Commission offices for the May 3, 2022 special election?

A: 4:00 p.m. on Friday, April 22, 2022. If you file as a “write-in” candidate your name will not appear on the ballot. Please contact the City Clerk for the correct form.

Q: What exactly will be on the ballot for the May 3, 2022 election?

A: Voters in the City of Ludington will have the opportunity to vote on the following:

- (1) a proposal on whether the city’s charter should be revised; and
- (2) candidates for nine seats on the City Charter Commission.

If the vote in favor of revising the City Charter earns a majority of the votes cast, the procedure for beginning the revision of the Charter shall be approved, and the candidates for the nine seats on the Charter Commission receiving the most votes shall be seated as Members of the Charter Commission.

Q: What is the Charter?

A: The City of Ludington's City Charter is a legal document that prescribes procedures to be followed in operating the City, establishes the powers and duties of elected officials, creates safeguards to protect against misuse of authority, and provides opportunities for citizen involvement. Under general law, the electors of the City have the power and authority to adopt and amend the City Charter. The City of Ludington has been operating under its City Charter since a previous general revision of the Charter was approved by a vote of the people in 1992. Michigan law allows a city to organize a Charter Commission to perform a comprehensive update/revision to the City Charter to meet the current and future needs of the city.

Q: What are the duties and responsibilities of a Charter Commissioner and Charter Commission?

A: To revise and update the City Charter.

Q: What sorts of tasks will Charter Commissioners perform in revising the City's Charter?

A: Tasks that the Charter Commission and its Commissioners will need to perform include:

- Participating in meetings of the Charter Commission and committees (meetings will be open to the public).
- Organizing: selecting officers (chairperson, secretary, etc.); establishing a meeting schedule and timetable. Possibly establishing committees (optional).
- Keep a journal of their actions.
- Fill their vacancies, if applicable.
- Develop a strategy to accomplish the goal of revising the City Charter.
- Proposing, reviewing, studying and revising proposed changes or modifications to charter.
- Gathering community and City officials' input regarding proposed changes to the City Charter.

Q: Will Charter Commissioners receive pay for their service?

A: Yes. The City Council will fix in advance of the election of a Charter Commission the place of its meeting, the compensation of its members, and the money for the expense(s) of the Commission.

Q: How long will the Charter Commission be active (what type of time commitment)?

A: Revising a Charter can be a lengthy process. It is likely that, from start to finish, the entire process will take more than a year, and possibly up to three (3) years. The Charter Commission will meet periodically and Michigan law authorizes Charter Commission members to be paid for up to a total of ninety (90) meetings.

Q: Can City of Ludington residents be involved in the Charter Revision if they are not elected to the Commission?

A: Yes. All Charter Commission meetings will be open to the public and consequently, there will be at least one opportunity during each meeting for members of the public to provide comment. The Charter Commission may also allow the opportunity for public comment and input during its meetings. In addition, members of the public would be able to provide written comments to the Charter Commission regarding the Commission's activities and/or proposed revisions to the Charter. There may also be opportunities for public input as the Charter Commission gathers facts regarding the revision process. The Commission may also welcome input from members of the public who express an interest in assisting the Commission with the revision of the charter and it is possible that the Commission may seek out the assistance of residents with certain aspects of the revision process.

Q: Will the City Council or other City Officials oversee the Charter Commission, direct the Commission priorities, or otherwise manage the Charter Revision process?

A: Not in their official capacity. A Charter Commission is essentially an independent public body, separate from, and not directly subordinate to, a City Council. However, just like all citizens and other members of the public, City Council members and other City officials will have the ability to comment on the activities of the Charter Commission and provide input regarding the revisions to the Charter. The Charter Commission will have access to legal counsel and staff expertise during the entire process.

Q: If the City Council does not oversee the Charter Revision, who will ensure that the revision is sound and meets the intended objectives?

A: Initially, the responsibility for directing the content of the revised charter falls to the Charter Commission. Once the charter commission completes its initial process of revising the Charter, it must be submitted for review by the Governor's office, which will also involve review by the Attorney General's office for legal compliance. Ultimately, the City's voters will vote on whether the revised Charter is sound and in the best interests of the City. The revised Charter will need to be voted on before it becomes law.

For more questions, please contact the City Clerk's office at 231-845-6237 or email the City Clerk at dlluskin@ci.ludington.mi.us