

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
CITY OF WILDWOOD, FLORIDA

August 11, 2025 6:00 PM

(meeting taped)

1. Call to Order

Chairperson Fountaine called the meeting to order at 6 p.m.

2. Proper Noticing

City staff confirmed there was proper noticing for the meeting.

3. Roll Call

Attendee Name	Title	Status
David Fountaine	Chairperson	Present
Derrel Strickland	Vice Chairperson	Present
Andre Nacaxe	Voting Member	Present
Robin Caruthers	Voting Member	Present
Keith Pearlman	Voting Member	Present
Joe Elliott	Ex-officio Member	Present
Jenalyis Otero	Non-Voting Member	Present
Emily Ruiz	Non-Voting Member	Absent
Cassandra Smith	Assistant City Manager/CFO	Present
Madison Guinn	Executive Assistant	Present
Joshua Bills	City Attorney	Present

4. Determination of a Quorum

Chairperson Fountaine confirmed that a quorum was present.

5. Comments from the General Public

There were no members of the public present for the meeting.

6. Presentations

There were no presentations.

7. Action Items

A. Minutes for approval: June 16, 2025, Charter Review Committee Meeting

Chairperson Fountaine asked the committee members to review the minutes from the previous meeting held on June 16, 2025.

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Nacaxe
SECONDER:	Pearlman

AYES: Pearlman, Nacaxe, Strickland, Caruthers, Fontaine
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8. Discussion Items

A. Review of Article III of the City Charter

The committee began discussions on Article III of the City Charter, particularly the structure and election of city commissioners. As prepared by Chairperson Fontaine, committee members reviewed three possible options for taking action based on discussions at past meetings:

Option 1: No change, continuing the current at-large election system.

Option 2: Require commissioners to reside in specific districts, while still being elected at large.

Option 3: Create districts with commissioners elected solely by voters within their respective districts.

Committee members acknowledged both the opportunities and risks of implementing districts. Concerns were raised about potentially disrupting city leadership, the challenge of redistricting during periods of rapid growth, and the possibility of unintentionally concentrating representation from one geographic area. Others argued that district residency requirements would help ensure broader representation and prepare the city for long-term population changes, particularly given the rapid expansion of The Villages.

Several members expressed support for Option 2, noting the importance of guaranteeing representation from areas outside The Villages and allowing professional staff at the Supervisor of Elections office to handle district boundaries. Others preferred Option 1, emphasizing stability, the strength of at-large accountability, and the risk of districts fostering competition among wards instead of focusing on citywide needs. Option 3 was largely dismissed as too divisive.

After extensive discussion, the committee did not reach full consensus. The final outcome was a 3–2 preference for Option 1 (no change), but the committee agreed to note in its report to the Commission that both Options 1 and 2 were viable and had been carefully considered, leaving the ultimate decision to the City Commission.

The committee next discussed the position of Mayor and the process for which the Mayor is elected. Commissioner Elliott raised the question of whether the mayor should continue to be elected at-large by the public or instead be appointed by and from among the city commissioners, similar to the structure used by Sumter County. Members weighed the benefits of preserving voter control against the potential advantages of ensuring that an experienced commissioner serves as mayor. Ultimately, no member advanced a motion to change the current system, and the committee agreed to leave that section as is.

Finally, the committee reviewed qualifications for candidates for mayor and city commission. Under Article V, Section 3, the only requirements are U.S. citizenship, residency within the City of Wildwood, and voter registration. Members discussed the possibility of requiring a minimum residency period, with suggestions ranging from 90 days to one year. It was noted that case law has struck down longer requirements, such as two years, while one-year requirements have been upheld but not without question. The committee agreed this issue could be flagged for consideration, but no firm recommendation was made at this time.

Chairperson Fontaine concluded that while not all issues reached consensus, the committee had thoroughly examined the matters before it. The committee reflected on prior discussions, noting that districting was considered the most significant issue for review. With the committee

leaning toward recommending no changes to the current system or the City Charter as a whole, members agreed that pursuing additional ballot measures for other, less critical items would not be worthwhile at this time.

Members discussed the process for finalizing their recommendations and whether another meeting would be required. The City Attorney confirmed that, under Sunshine Law, a formal meeting would be necessary to review and approve the written report.

The committee agreed to schedule one final meeting to review the draft report summarizing its recommendations. The draft will be prepared in advance, reviewed for legal sufficiency, and presented for approval at that meeting.

B. Begin Review of Article IV of the City Charter

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9. Adjournment

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7 p.m.

RESULT:	Passed
MOVER:	Strickland
SECONDER:	Pearlman
AYES:	Pearlman, Nacaxe, Strickland, Caruthers, Fontaine

SEAL

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE
CITY OF WILDWOOD, FLORIDA

Date: 10/27/20

Chairperson: Paul Fournier