



Legislation Details (With Text)

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Title: Public Hearing to Receive Comment Concerning the Resolution of Intent to amend the City Charter to Retain the Current Form of Government and to Change the Term of Office from Two to Four Years and to Submit This Plan to a Referendum

Sponsors:

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Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
3/3/2015	1	City Council		

Public Hearing to Receive Comment Concerning the Resolution of Intent to amend the City Charter to Retain the Current Form of Government and to Change the Term of Office from Two to Four Years and to Submit This Plan to a Referendum

Department: Executive
Council District: All

Public Hearing: Yes
Advertising Date/By: N/A

Contact 1 and Phone: Tom Carruthers, City Attorney, 373-2320
Contact 2 and Phone: Jennifer Schneider, Assistant City Attorney, 373-2320

PURPOSE:

On February 19, 2015, City Council adopted a Resolution of Intent to amend the City Charter to retain the current form of government and to change the term of office from two to four years and to submit this plan to a referendum. Pursuant to §160A- 101 and 102, City Council shall now hold a public hearing and receive public comment on this plan. City Council will hear comments but will not take a vote at this meeting.

On February 4, 2015, Senate Bill 36 was filed and it proposes a City Council election system of one Council member from each of seven newly created voting districts, and one at-large Mayor with the Mayor having veto power. The system proposed by Senate Bill 36 is commonly referred to as the 7-1 system and would place the General Election on October 6, 2015. Comments regarding the merits of the current system and the proposed system shall also be heard at this public hearing.

BACKGROUND:

In 1983 the City of Greensboro adopted a City Council election system of one Council member elected from

each of its five districts, three Council members elected at-large, and one Mayor elected at large. The system adopted in 1983 is commonly referred to as the 5-3-1 system. The City of Greensboro supports its current system because it ensures fair and equitable representation of all residents of the City.

City Council adopted a legislative agenda on January 20, 2015, which included extending the term of office for City Council members from two years to four years pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes §160A-101(4) and (8) which permits the City Council and the Mayor to be elected for terms of either two years or four years.

Article 5 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes of North Carolina permits cities and towns to change their charters under Part 4 of that Article entitled “Modification of Form of Government.” This includes the option of having a referendum on charter amendments which may be initiated by the City Council or by the people.

After the public hearing, the Council may adopt an ordinance amending the charter to implement the amendments proposed in the Resolution of Intent. This ordinance shall be adopted no sooner than the next regularly scheduled City Council meeting and no later than 60 days from the date of the public hearing. The ordinance will only be effective if approved by a vote of the people in a special election. Council will schedule this vote by resolution at the time the ordinance is adopted. This special election shall occur at the next general election.

Because State election laws will only allow a special election at the time of the general election on odd numbered years, the special election would be on November 3, 2015, and Council’s proposed change, if approved by the voters, will not become effective until the 2017 election. If the General Assembly moves the general election to October 6, 2015, then the referendum will be heard on October 6, 2015.

BUDGET IMPACT:

Charlie Callicut, Guilford County Board of Elections Director, indicates that there will be no additional costs to add the referendum to the ballot.

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION REQUESTED:

It is recommended that City Council hold the public hearing.