

**From:** Lumm, Jane

**Sent:** Monday, July 06, 2015 2:05 PM

**To:** Taylor, Christopher (Mayor); Kailasapathy, Sumi; Briere, Sabra; Westphal, Kirk; Grand, Julie; Kunselman, Stephen; Krapohl, Graydon; Eaton, Jack; Warpehoski, Chuck; Anglin, Mike

**Cc:** Powers, Steve; Postema, Stephen; Fales, Mary Joan

**Subject:** Resolution Regarding Non-Partisan Local Elections

Dear Mayor and Council,

I hope that you all had an enjoyable Fourth and holiday weekend.

With the work session scheduled tonight with the League of Women Voters regarding local elections, I thought it might be helpful to pass along now for your information the draft local election revision resolution that I have been working on over the last few months with Mary Fales of the City Attorney's Office. Mary has been extremely helpful and the draft resolution is attached.

As a summary, under this proposal:

- the method for electing the Ann Arbor Mayor and City Council members would be changed from a partisan basis to a non-partisan basis
- elections for Mayor and City Council would be conducted in November – August primary elections would be eliminated
- nominations would be by petition
- terms of office for Mayor and Council members would remain at 2 years
- Mayoral elections would remain in even numbered years and council member elections would remain staggered – one member of each ward elected in even numbered years and one member elected in odd numbered years.

As you know, changing local election structure requires amending the city charter which must be approved by voters. Council can place a question on the ballot by a 3/5 vote of its members (7 affirmative votes). For a ballot question to be included on the November 3, 2015 ballot, the state's certification deadline is August 11, 2015. This resolution will be placed on the July 20<sup>th</sup> council agenda for council consideration.

The **ballot language** for this proposal is as follows:

**ANN ARBOR CITY CHARTER AMENDMENT ELIMINATING THE  
PARTISAN PRIMARY PROCESS AND ESTABLISHING NON-PARTISAN  
NOMINATION AND ELECTION FOR THE OFFICES OF MAYOR AND  
COUNCIL AT CITY GENERAL ELECTION**

*Shall Sections 13.1, 13.6, 13.8, 13.11, 13.13, and 13.14 of the City Charter be amended and Sections 13.4 and 13.12 of the City Charter be deleted to eliminate the requirement of a primary election for the offices of Mayor and City Council Member, provide for nomination of candidates for those offices by filing of nominating petitions and election of those candidates at the City's general election and the removal of any reference to a candidate's party designation on the ballot?*

Yes

No

Attorney Fales reviewed the proposed ballot language with the Attorney General's office in Lansing and the language has been approved on a preliminary basis.

The resolution also shows the **city charter changes** that would be necessary with this proposal (see markups in the resolution). The required changes can be summarized as follows:

**Section 13.1 – Officers to be Elected**

- *Delete references to primaries*

**Section 13.4 - Primary Elections**

- *Delete entire section*

**Section 13.6 - Qualifications of Electors**

- *Delete references to primaries*

**Section 13.8 - Nominating Petitions**

- *In paragraph (b), revise filing deadline from filing "not later than 5PM on the seventh Monday prior to the date of the regular City primary*

*election” to “not later than 4PM on the fifteenth Tuesday prior to the date of the regular city election.*

- *2015 example - July 21 deadline for Nov 3 election*

#### Section 13.11 - Form of Ballots

- *Delete reference to primary*
- *Add sentence “No party vignette or emblem or other designation shall appear on the ballot”*

#### Section 13.12 - Canvass of Voters

- *Delete entire section*

#### Section 13.13 - Recount

- *Delete references to primaries*

#### Section 13.14 - Tie Vote

- *Delete references to primaries*

I recognize we will not be taking any action tonight on this topic, but wanted to share this resolution/proposal with you in advance of the work session anyway and well before Council begins deliberations on on this resolution or other potential election reforms at the July 20<sup>th</sup> meeting.

As you know, by still conducting local elections on a partisan basis, the City of Ann Arbor is an outlier both in the state of Michigan and among our typical benchmark cities – the vast majority of which conduct non-partisan local elections. Given that, it seems appropriate the community should have a robust conversation on the matter and a voice in deciding whether a change should be made.

All best, Jane