

1 Council. That was the issue and maybe adding two more, at-large seats, since we can't redistrict  
2 or make a change in districts.

3  
4 Mulroy – Any other comments? We will park that for now. If you read the minutes, Jim explained  
5 the benefit of the 4-3 in that you get to vote for the majority of the Council. The charge was, do  
6 we want to stay with the mix of single member districts and at-large or go with all single member  
7 districts and a mayor. I do not want to misrepresent, but what I heard from the last meeting is that  
8 there is high level of satisfaction with where we are now. If that is what I am seeing around the  
9 table, we will leave it at that for right now. I've heard comments on adding two members, we are  
10 in the target area. If it is not broken, then there is no reason to fix it.

11  
12 English – Yes. But we also need to be proactive. And not wait until it comes and must face the  
13 issue. We are growing and it will happen.

14  
15 C. Johnson – Some people are saying now that Council Members don't have time to get back to  
16 them because being on the City Council is a full time job, while working 40 hours at your own  
17 job. Why not split it up so more people can get in touch with people.

18  
19 Mulroy – So we have two comments and I had several going the other direction. If we do pursue  
20 this, we must have Council to amend the Charge. I will take a straw vote around the table of  
21 increasing the Council Members from a number of seven to a number of nine? Who is in favor of  
22 asking for permission to consider?

23  
24 C. Johnson – We know how it's going to go anyway.

25  
26 Cheek – I am not opposed to making it a consideration and discuss it further.

27  
28 Mulroy – Who is in favor of requesting that City Council amend the charge to consider adding the  
29 seats?

30  
31 Urbina – Are we okay with leaving it as is or add more Council members considered in the charge?

32  
33 Mulroy – How many are in favor of requesting an amended charge from City Council to examine  
34 whether we should entertain going from seven to nine members on the Council? Vote for is 8 out  
35 of 21. It's not going forward.

36  
37 We can bring it up again before the committee finishes in a month or two. At this time we are not  
38 going to make that request.

39  
40 ***Terms –***

41  
42 Mulroy – The backup you have shows that the last Charter committee exhausted that issue.  
43 Whether you agree with the final outcome because it doesn't make allowance that you can switch  
44 seats and run. The voters still have the final say. That item passed with the voters, 55% voting  
45 yes. This was not close, it was highly publicized. Is there any reason to pursue changing the terms  
46 of two years versus three years in office?

1 Rivers – I was on that committee and we had that conversation. It was very eye opening when you  
2 start talking about it. In the true sense of things, you can vote every year and not have turbulence,  
3 and if you're happy with your people it gets harder the further up the chain you go and do all that  
4 stuff. We discussed the cost savings to the City, by going with three years, the cost savings due to  
5 not as many elections as well as the cost savings for the candidates. At the same time, when you  
6 do that, you limit how often someone can choose a different person.

7  
8 Mulroy – It was pretty exhaustive. When discussing the three year term it sounds good but when  
9 topics like ethics and recall come up, you want the ability to have your man come before the voters  
10 every two years. The difficulty with the two year term, the election is in May. You get sworn in,  
11 the budget has been formulated, followed by summer vacations, coming back in August to  
12 formalize the budget work that has already been completed. Then the budget gets passed, followed  
13 by holidays and then you may get some work done. What I suggest is moving the elections to  
14 November. You start a new budget year, don't have controversy. That would make better use of  
15 your time.

16  
17 Cheek – Better voter turnout too.

18  
19 Bland – Is May election part of the Charter?

20  
21 Mulroy – It is now.

22  
23 Alexander – Could argue that it's a really good thing to have elections in May. We could have our  
24 partisan battles in November, that's where it should be. One of the great strengths of the Denton  
25 City Council is that it is non-partisan. It is really important to maintain that. In the community  
26 here we've had an excellent experience of bi-partisan cooperation and I believe that has been a  
27 strength to the community.

28  
29 Bland – Downside of elections in November, the elections get sucked into the partisan battle.

30  
31 Mulroy – Bryan, can the City Budget be moved around?

32  
33 Langley – The reason the fiscal year is October 1 through September 30 is based on the tax  
34 calendar. Could it be changed? I'm sure it could, but you're getting your property values as of  
35 January 1, sending out tax bills in October, due January 31. That's the process.

36  
37 Mulroy – Thanks Bryan. The good attributes of the three year term is to put people to work as  
38 soon as they are elected and avoid that dead space.

39  
40 Bland – Thought it was suggested that the three year might be good to look at.

41  
42 Mulroy – The Charter Committee exhausted that.

43  
44 Alexander – There are lots of good discussion for both two and three year terms. Idea may be  
45 good if half the Council would not be up for re-election every two years and accomplish more in  
46 a longer term.

1 Mulroy – My point is that this has been exhausted. I just don't want to be in a position of undoing  
2 what was clearly discussed, processed and went before the voters already.

3  
4 English – I think three years would be better. Once you get into office, and figure out what's going  
5 on, it's time to run again. Three years will allow them to get some work done and fully understand  
6 city government.

7  
8 The group discussed the pros and cons of two and three year terms and the points that were covered  
9 by the Charter committee. The Charter committee thoroughly discussed all the issues and it has  
10 gone to the voters.

11  
12 Mulroy – We can come back and revisit this. There is merit in discussion, just want to avoid  
13 undoing work that has been devoted to this subject.

14  
15 ***Ethics –***

16  
17 Mulroy – We will spend the next ten minutes on ethics. As a citizen of the community, what is  
18 your main concern with ethics? I want to hear your concern with City Hall and City government  
19 ethics.

20  
21 Sullivan – My concern is the 10% income threshold. The idea that anything below is not considered  
22 a conflict, is way out of line and concerns me.

23  
24 Sanchez – Minorities that are not being represented in boards and commissions. Minorities are  
25 not being represented.

26  
27 Jorge – I agree. This would be a good opportunity for the City to expand that outreach for  
28 everybody that wants to serve in some capacity.

29  
30 Holl – We need to address this area and understand community concerns. I've looked at the Codes  
31 including 171, 176, and 573. My question is, how do we use what is good and add to make it  
32 better?

33  
34 Rivers – To determine what is ethical and what is not ethical.

35  
36 English – Skip over me and come back.

37  
38 Alexander – Ethics are very difficult to define but incredibly important. I'm in favor of looking  
39 very carefully at what we need as a stronger statement on ethics without allowing the process to  
40 become a political tool for harassing individual council members. As a committee we could strike  
41 that balance.

42  
43 Gallivan – If an ethics policy is a way to help more minorities become involved through boards  
44 and commissions, I'm for that.

1 *Create six single-member districts and one at-large mayoral district –*

2  
3 So now we'll move to districts. I think we determined we'd leave it as it is. It's not broken. Jim  
4 really gave us an overlay of how well it's worked before and we should keep it that way. I want  
5 to move past that and go to Terms.

6  
7 *Terms –*

8  
9 Mulroy – We had some discussion last time and Patrice sent an email, because I mentioned the  
10 possibility of moving the election cycle could solve or minimize some of the problems. Patrice  
11 took the time to give us some information, so I wanted to open the floor with it.

12  
13 Lyke – Is learning the budget and being a part of the budget at the beginning, the primary reason  
14 to look at going to a three year term? The three year term discussion fell flat the last time a charter  
15 review committee got together. Is this something other cities do? I used some stats from Austin.  
16 Looking at our incredibly low voter turnout for city election, if we could capture more people by  
17 moving the vote to November that would help our problem with recall percentages. We could get  
18 people into office and have them there at the beginning of the budget cycle. That way we wouldn't  
19 have to mess with the two year terms. Last November, 48 % of Denton County showed up to vote  
20 in the national election. If we had 48% of Denton residents voting in the city wide election that's  
21 starting to look like a mandate. As it is, it almost looks like special interest. By raising recall  
22 numbers, increasing voter turnout, with the hope of also increasing diversity; we have that potential  
23 to get our council members in there at the beginning of the year; learn the budget as its being  
24 worked through. I do understand that we have traditionally held our elections in the spring, but  
25 sometimes it's time for a tradition to die and develop a new tradition if it better serves the  
26 population

27  
28 Sullivan – The State is looking at two voting dates of March and November, to reduce the number  
29 of elections and reduce the cost and get more people to the polls.

30  
31 Gallivan – What would it take to move elections to November? It's a good idea. I still say my  
32 argument for three years is enhanced by doing that; but what does it take to go to November?

33  
34 Mulroy – we would have to ask the Council to update our charge.

35  
36 Sullivan – The budget isn't the be all to end all. It takes time to understand a budget of our size  
37 and all the complications that go with it. That's part of my argument for the three years is the  
38 distraction of having to campaign every year. Three years seems to be the one that appeals to  
39 people; with a stronger ethics policy.

40  
41 Zoltner – What would that mean for DISD?

42  
43 Alexander – It wouldn't create a necessity to change, but might prompt the change. I feel strongly  
44 that at least the people that vote in the city council election are focused on the issues that are unique  
45 to Denton. But if you put the city election with the national election, the problems and concerns  
46 of Denton will be lost. I really think it's a good idea for us to have an election that's for the city

1 of Denton. On the long ballot, you may say it would be a nonpartisan election, but you would see  
2 both parties running candidates as partisan people. There's a place for partisanship, but I don't  
3 think it's good for city government. That's the major drawback I see. I'm comfortable with three  
4 year terms, because city officials are constantly having to face reelection. There is a strong  
5 argument to be made that we might create more stability, and give a better learning curve if we  
6 lengthen the term from two to three years. I'd be very interested in seeing us do that. If we do,  
7 we want to be careful about the minimum number on the recall. Because right now we have a  
8 recall election every two years whether you like it or not.

9  
10 Zoltner – A number of people would really be opposed to anything longer than a two term. That  
11 would make them less accountable than a US or State representative. I would be opposed to  
12 changing it from a two year to three year term.

13  
14 Ramsay – I am very opposed to a November election.

15  
16 Alexander – Current two year terms work well for the structure of the “At Large” positions.

17  
18 Mulroy – I agree that we want to stay away with tainting municipal elections with partisan politics.  
19 I don't have an issue with three year terms other than two points. First, it was examined  
20 exhaustively by the last committee and they didn't go there. Second, for us, ethics is the big gorilla;  
21 the overshadowing charge. It would be difficult to present to voters a stipend, change the terms,  
22 and raising the recall bar. It's not the right mix to take to the voters

23  
24 Holl – When someone runs unopposed they are secure. But if there was also an at large, since  
25 we're already at the polls we're inclined to vote for the unopposed person as well. If we're able  
26 to stagger them you might solve two problems.

27  
28 Lyke – When we say we like the elections in May, it's because we want a boutique election. In  
29 2016 only 6000 people voted in the entire city of Denton. You get people to the polls by saying  
30 you are going to get them this or that. Encourage candidates to go beyond one particular pet  
31 project.

32  
33 Mulroy – we're not going to solve that tonight. We'll come back to Terms after the next meeting.

34  
35 *Ethics –*

36  
37 Mulroy – I want go around room and have you all give a specific incident or complaint that  
38 happened in the community that raised your suspicion or caused you to have doubt about  
39 credibility, without being disparaging about the individual or a position. So as we go forward we  
40 have captured what the angst is.

41  
42 R. Johnson – From what I heard there was quite a bit of controversy related to the Bucee's decision  
43 in relation to motives, both upfront and behind the scenes.

44  
45 Mulroy – Whatever the merits were, it wasn't transparent that there wasn't any self-interest.