



CITY OF CLAWSON

425 N. MAIN STREET | CLAWSON, MICHIGAN 48017
PHONE: 248.435.4500 | FAX: 248.435.0515
WWW.CITYOFCLAWSON.COM

CITY OF CLAWSON – CHARTER COMMISSION

Frequently Asked Questions

(revised July 2021)

At the upcoming November 2, 2021 general election you will see that there are concurrent ballot proposals for the electors to vote on. Below you will find some frequently asked questions as they pertain to a Charter Commission.

Q: Who may serve as a Charter Commission?

A: Any registered voter of the City of Clawson (except city officers and/or employees, whether elected or appointed) who has resided in the City for at least two 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 25 registered electors of the City. Please contact the City Clerk for forms.

Q: What is the deadline for filing a petition for the Charter Commission offices that will be on the ballot for the November 2, 2021 election?

A: 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, July 20, 2021.

Q: What is the deadline for filing as a “write-in” candidate for the Charter Commission offices for the November 2, 2021 election?

A: 4:00 p.m. on Friday, October 22, 2021. 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 November 2, 2021 election?

A: Voters in the City of Clawson will have the opportunity to vote on (1) a proposal regarding whether the City’s charter should be revised, and (2) candidates for nine seats for the City Charter Commission. IF the City’s voters vote in favor of revising the City’s charter, the nine (9) candidates for the charter commission shall take office.

POLICE & FIRE
248.524.3477
FAX: 248.435.4847

PUBLIC WORKS
248.288.3222
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248.589.0334

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248.588.5500
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Q: What is the Charter?

A: The City of Clawson’s charter is a legal document that establishes a basic framework of law within the City. Over time, as the City changes and the needs of its residents and property owner’s change, that legal framework can become “stale”. The City of Clawson’s current charter dates back to 1940, although it has been amended several times since then. 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 the Charter Commission?

A: In short, to revise and update the City’s charter. The clerk presides at the first meeting, administers the oaths of office, and acts as the clerk of the commission.

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

A: Tasks that the charter commission and commissioners will need to perform include:

- Participating in meetings of the charter commission and committees (which meetings will be open to the public)
- Organizing: (1) selecting officers (Chairperson, Secretary, etc.); establishing a meeting schedule and timetable; and establishing committees (optional)
- Keep a journal of their actions
- Fill their vacancies (if applicable)
- Developing a strategy to accomplish the goal of revising the charter
- Proposing, reviewing, studying and revising proposed changes or modifications to the charter
- Gathering community and City officials’ input regarding proposed changes to the charter

Q: Will Charter Commissioners receive pay for their service?

A: No, this is a volunteer position.

Q: How long with the Charter Commission be active (i.e. what kind of time commitment is involved)?

A: Revising a charter can be a lengthy process. It is likely that, from beginning to end, the entire process will take more than one 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 ninety (90) meetings.

Q: Can Clawson residents be involved in the Charter revision if they are not elected to the Commission?

A: Yes. At a minimum, 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 other opportunities for public comment and input during its meeting. In addition to those opportunities, 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 to the Charter, and it is possible that the Commission may seek out the assistance of some residents with certain aspects of the revision process.

Q: Will the City Council, or other City officials, oversee the Charter Commission, direct the Commission's 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 doesn't 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. Then, 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 the Attorney General's office for legal compliance. Ultimately, the City's voters will weigh in on whether the revised Charter is sound and in the best interests of the City, as the revised Charter will need to be voted on before it would become law.

For more questions, please contact the City Clerk's office at 248.435.4500 ext. 116 or 118 or email the City Clerk at agitschlag@cityofclawson.com