

Special Committee for Charter Revision Holds Initial Meeting

(July 21, 2009) The committee created to review the current city charter and to develop a new one to replace the city's 90-year old charter held its initial meeting at 7 pm on July 20 in city hall. The committee is composed of councilmembers Jim Jester, Richard Green and Theresa Kernerly and city clerk Kristen Mahan.

The first order of business was to review and discuss the background and history of municipal charters in Georgia, applicable legal controls and the process from start to finish. The committee reviewed in detail the model charter that the Georgia Municipal Association has provided as a guide for municipalities revising and updating their charters.

A major portion of the project involved incorporating the existing charter sections into the new, updated format of the GMA model – and that has been accomplished. The next task will be to review all of the provisions of the current charter and to identify topics, issues and sections that should be considered for revision. For example, the number and composition of councilmembers – should there be four rather than six and the advantages of one or the other. Another example would be changing residency requirements for candidates – from the current three months to six months or even one-year.

Between now and the next meeting, scheduled for 7 pm on August 10 in city hall, committee members, councilmembers and the public at-large are encouraged to identify items that should be considered for change and to send those items and issues to the city clerk (kmahan@cityofhoschton.com) or just drop a note in the drop box in front of city hall – or better yet, to attend the next meeting of the committee and voice their recommendations directly to the committee.

The city clerk will serve at the point of contact for all questions and suggestions and the public is encouraged to attend, participate and be aware of this important project. In the meanwhile, all of the resource documents being utilized by the committee will be linked to this article and may be downloaded for review – Jim Jester