

Community Board 13Q Resolution on Charter Revision, June 28, 2010

Whereas the Mayor appointed a Commission to review the entire Charter of the City of New York, and issue a report outlining findings and recommendations to amend or revise the Charter;

Whereas NYC should be recognized as a region;

Whereas the boroughs and local communities should be meaningfully involved in decisions on the delivery and effective allocation of municipal services and City resources;

Whereas the City budget never reflects the need to allocate resources and services to reflect different neighborhood priorities as represented and identified by Community Boards;

Whereas the NYC should explore regional models for funding agencies;

Whereas there should be a greater role for the borough presidents in land use planning for their boroughs, allocation of agency resources within the boroughs, overseeing local implementation of the capital budget and oversight of delivery of local services;

Whereas a need exists to strengthen the role of Community Boards and the Offices of the Borough Presidents and empower these institutions with the resources to carry out their responsibilities under the City Charter;

Whereas a need exists to correct the 1989 mistakes that removed legislative review of decisions of the Board of Standards and Appeals, and the failure to include rules for major concessions;

Whereas New York City's policies wrongly subsidize extra illegal occupancies that crowd schools and overburden services;

Whereas a focus on non-partisan elections, distracts from the need to focus on structural governmental reforms that empower City residents, their communities and their boroughs;

Therefore Community Board 13 makes the following recommendations that address how to make the city of New York work better for its residents and urges the CRC to include each in its proposal it makes to the voters:

Land Use Items

- Provide the Community Boards, Borough Presidents and the Public Advocate with the resources to empower each to carry out their charter functions and help New York City weather the current fiscal crisis; use the IBO/OMB analogy to assure each of the offices adequate funding by base-lining funding for those offices and setting funding for each office against a set percentage of the overall expense budget.
- Subject all residential, commercial, industrial and public (agency) developments that occupy a city block or more, and all public agencies' projects to ULURP public review (which includes Community Board, Borough President and City Council review and oversight and approvals),

whether or not a zoning or permit change is required.

- Create distinct borough-based planning and zoning offices under supervision of each borough president;
- Maximize community participation in City approval of major concessions for private use of public spaces, including parkland, by involving the Borough Presidents, Council Members and Community Boards in formulating rules defining and governing major concessions.
- Empower the City Council to review all Board of Standards and Appeals dispositions.
- Provide for Council oversight of all decisions by the City Planning Commission.

Government Structure

- Expand the role of borough presidents in local land use planning for their boroughs, allocation of agency resources within the boroughs, overseeing local implementation of the capital budget and greater oversight of the delivery of city services in their boroughs.

Budget

- Budget for the delivery of city services where appropriate by borough and community district.
- Set up a mechanism that devolves resources and service delivery to the appropriate borough or local level that directs City resources to address community needs such as precinct staffing, code enforcement, tree pruning/ removal, traffic studies and signal installation, and programs for youth and seniors.
- Make elected officials accountable by barring mayoral rate-setting boards and authorities from imposing budget allocations unless the Council grants such authority, as in the example of the Water Board setting rates after, rather than, as it does now, before the budget's adoption.

Oversight

- Shift responsibility for preparation of the Mayor's Management Report (MMR) to the Independent Budget Office and renaming the document the Independent Management Report.
- Create an independent CCRB by base-lining its funding as a percent of the NYPD budget, and establishing a mechanism to make the appointed CCRB members more reflective of the City and controlled less by the administration.
- Establish a two-term limit for the offices of Mayor, Public Advocate, City Comptroller, Borough President and City Council Member that may be not amended except by a referendum of the voters in the year before the mayoral election.
- Make recommendations for approval by the electorate on a subject matter basis that empowers voters to vote separately and distinctly on each item for their consideration and approval.