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CC: Concolino, Shirley
Date: 7/28/2009 2:29 PM
Subject: Member Inquiry
Attachments: Svava Article.pdf; Council elections.xls

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to share with you information I have researched related to an inquiry from Cecily Hastings. Ms. Hastings was interested in obtaining information related to cities that have both at large and district elected Council seats.

Attached is an article written by Professor James Svava (who participated in the academic panel discussion with the Charter Review Committee) that addresses the question. Please note that Prof. Svava has since relocated to Arizona State University. On page 13 of the article, Prof. Svava notes that 38% of cities over 200,000 (in 2003) had council members elected by a combination of district and at large seats. Because the article did not note the specific cities, I sent him an email requesting the list of cities and specific breakdown of at large vs. district seats in each city.

In response, Prof. Svava provided me the attached spreadsheet with cities over 200,000 and a breakdown of how they elect council members. His list identifies the cities with combinations, but does not identify the number of individual seats that are elected at-large vs. district. Identifying the specific breakdown requires a visit to the individual city website. Here's a summary of a few I researched:

Denver - 11 by district, 2 at large plus the Mayor

Reno - 5 by district, 1 at large, plus the Mayor

Arlington TX - 7 by district, 3 at large, plus the Mayor

Kansas City, MO - 13 councilmembers, including the mayor. The City is divided into six council districts. The mayor and six councilmembers are elected at large, with one at-large councilmember representing each district. Six councilmembers are elected only by voters in their districts.

Charlotte, NC - 7 by district, 4 at large, plus the Mayor (presides at Council if they want to, may cast vote if tie, Mayor Pro Tem presides if Mayor does not attend)

Tampa - 3 at large, 4 by district, one of the 7 is elected Chair

Atlanta - 12 by district, 6 at large, Meetings are presided over Council President; City has Executive Mayor

Indianapolis (City/County) - 25 by district, 4 at large; City has Executive Mayor

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