



Board of County Commissioners

Ken Keechl

Commissioner - District 4

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April 2007 Newsletter

“Charter Review” By Broward County Commissioner, Ken Keechl

I would like to take the opportunity this month to discuss with you an extremely important, but not well-known, body that has the ability to propose substantial changes to the structure (and authority) of the Broward County Commission: the Broward County Charter Review Commission.

The powers granted to the Broward County Commission are derived from Broward County’s Charter. In essence, this document is Broward County’s “Constitution”. Its many provisions include a “citizens’ bill of rights”; the number of County Commissioners (9); the manner in which we are elected (in single member districts); and the length of our terms (4 years). It is our Charter that also provides the Broward County Commission with a rather unique County power—its ultimate supremacy with regard to many municipal land use decisions.

Section 6.01 of the Charter provides for the appointment of the Charter Review Commission in June 2000 and every six years thereafter. As a result, the current Charter Review Commission’s term began on June 2006. The Commission is authorized to conduct a comprehensive study of any or all phases of county government.

Why should you care? The answer is because the 19 members of the current Charter Review Commission have the power to place Charter amendments directly on the ballot in November 2008. And while it takes a supermajority vote of the Charter Review Commission to exercise this power, if 13 members agree to propose a Charter amendment, the Broward County Commission has no say in the matter. The proposed Charter amendment shall be placed on the ballot for a vote by Broward County’s residents.

The current Charter Review Commission is deliberating on a monthly basis and taking testimony from elected officials and the public. Many important Charter amendments are being contemplated.

Some of the many issues under consideration by the Charter Review Commission include the following:

--should Broward County have a “strong mayor” form of government?

--should the number of Broward County Commissioners be increased or decreased?

--should Broward County Commissioners continue to be elected in single member districts or should they be elected county-wide?

--if the County retains single member districts, should the districts be re-drawn more often than every 10 years, and by whom?

--should the Sheriff, Property Appraiser, Supervisor of Elections, and Clerk of the Courts be appointed rather than elected?

--should the Charter contain a specific Code of Ethics?

-- should the supremacy of Broward County’s authority with regard to many municipal land use decisions be eliminated?

These are just a few of the many important issues under consideration by the Charter Review Commission. More information about the Charter Review Commission can be found at www.Broward.org. Public hearings will be occurring throughout the year. I encourage your attendance and input at these public hearings.

As usual, if you have any questions, comments, concerns or problems, please feel free to contact me. Remember, I work for you.

Until next month...

Ken Keechl, Broward County Commissioner, District 4

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