

Frequently Asked Questions About the Pepper Pike City Charter and the Charter Review Commission of 2024

❖ What is the Pepper Pike City Charter ?

The City Charter is the basic document that authorizes City government, the Office of the Mayor, the City Council, various Boards and Commissions, the administrative departments of the City (Police, Fire, Service, Finance, etc.), and serves as the “blueprint” for how the City is structured and administered. The City Charter is to the City as the Constitution is to the Nation.

❖ When was the Pepper Pike City Charter written and adopted ?

When the Village of Pepper Pike (Est. 1924) grew to over 5,000 population, it became the City of Pepper Pike. That milestone was achieved in 1967. The Charter was written in 1966 in preparation for becoming a City the following year.

❖ Has the Pepper Pike City Charter been reviewed or amended since 1966 ?

It has been amended a few times, for specific purposes, but has not been fully reviewed or updated since it was written in 1966.

❖ Is it normal for a City Charter to go unreviewed and unevaluated for 58 years ?

No. Most cities have a process in place to periodically review and update their Charter.

❖ Is the current Pepper Pike City Charter fully compliant with the Constitution of the State of Ohio and the current Ohio Revised Code

No. The current Pepper Pike City Charter is not fully compliant with the State Constitution and Laws of the State of Ohio. The State Constitution and Ohio Revised Code have evolved and changed significantly since 1966 and there has been no prior attempt to reconcile the Pepper Pike Charter with those changes.

❖ Who authorized the Charter Review Commission in 2024 ?

The Pepper Pike Charter Review Commission was authorized by legislation passed by the Pepper Pike City Council on April 17, 2024, and signed into law by the Mayor.

❖ How was the Pepper Pike Charter Review Commission selected, and who chose the members of the Commission ?

- The City of Pepper Pike asked the residents of the City to volunteer to serve on a Charter Review Commission, by USPS mail and email, in the Spring of 2024.
- Thirty members of the community volunteered to serve and submitted applications and qualifications, which were reviewed by the Mayor and members of the Council.
- Many volunteers were already known to the Mayor and the members of the Council, and some were not well known by either or both the Mayor or any members of the Council. Applications were reviewed by the Mayor and the members of the Council and interviews were held where necessary.
- On July 24, 2024, the Mayor and the Council met together in public session to cast ballots, in rank order, for their individual selection of members to serve on the Charter Review Commission.
- The nine candidates with the highest combined number of votes cast by the Mayor and the members of the Council were selected to serve on the Commission.
- On average, each elected official voted for 6 applicants who were chosen to serve on the Commission including 6 by the Mayor, and between 5 and 7 applicants for each Council Member.

❖ What are the backgrounds and qualifications of the people chosen to serve on the Pepper Pike Charter Review Commission ?

- Included among the nine members of the Commission are
 - Four attorneys, including one who currently serves as the Law Director of another municipality in Cuyahoga County, with extensive experience in the process of conducting a Charter review.
 - Two accountants/financial managers.
 - One retired physician.
 - One former business owner and elected public servant.
 - One business owner and regulatory professional with an advanced degree in Municipal Governance.
- Six members have been active in community service for many years, and three have resided in Pepper Pike for a few years to over thirty years and this is their first service on a municipal Board or Commission.

❖ Did the members of the Pepper Pike Charter Review Commission take an Oath of Office to serve the City of Pepper Pike ?

Yes. The members of the Pepper Pike Charter Review Commission were sworn in by the Mayor at the opening of their first meeting.

❖ When was the first meeting of the Pepper Pike Charter Review Commission and how long did the process take ?

The first meeting was held on July 31, 2024. The Commission met over a four-and-a-half-month period and held seventeen working sessions, all advertised and open to the public. The process concluded on December 19 when the Commission adopted a comprehensive report which was submitted to the City Council and the Mayor and made available to the public on the City website, along with the ninety-four pages of collated meeting minutes.

❖ How was the Pepper Pike Charter Review Commission organized and how were its officers selected ?

At the first meeting of the Commission the members selected a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and a Secretary. Either the Chairperson or Vice Chairperson presided over all meetings of the Commission, determined the agenda, and invited comments and written input from the public, City elected officials, and City employees and staff members.

❖ Which Pepper Pike City officials attended the meetings of the Commission to provide input and explain how the government currently operates ?

Meetings of the Commission were attended by the Mayor and three liaisons from the City Council, all of whom contributed their thoughts and suggestions to the Commission.

❖ Who served as staff to the Commission ?

Mr. Steve Byron, Law Director of the City of Pepper Pike, served as legal advisor to the Commission, attended most meetings in person, and drafted revised Charter language when requested by the Commission, and when he believed that sections of the current Charter are not in compliance with the State Constitution and Laws of the State of Ohio. The Mayor’s Executive Assistant and the Clerk of the Council assisted the Commission with logistical arrangements for Commission meetings, communications, and the posting of all the work product of the Commission on the City’s website on an ongoing basis throughout the Charter Review process.