

**Charter Study Commission
City of Plainfield, New Jersey
Meeting Minutes
March 28, 2013 Meeting
Plainfield City Hall Library, 7:30 p.m.**

Call to Order: Mr. Smiley called the meeting to order at 7:32 p.m.

Salute to the Flag: Mrs. Davis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Open Public Meeting Law: Ms. Criscione announced that the Notice Requirement provided for in the Open Public Meeting Law had been satisfied. Notice was properly given, said notice having been transmitted to the Courier-News and the Star-Ledger on 12/26/12, as well as posting on the City website and on the City Clerk's bulletin board.

Roll Call of Commission Members: Mr. Smiley took roll call. Commissioners Jeanette Criscione, Treasurer; Mary Burgwinkle, Secretary; Marie Davis, Assistant Secretary; John Stewart, Vice Chair and Mr. Smiley, Chair were present.

Minutes: The 3/14/13 meeting minutes were adopted unanimously by voice vote, with no dissents or abstentions.

Interviews: Mr. Smiley announced that Former Finance Director Ronald West was interviewed prior to this meeting and that a recording can be played, time permitting. Live interviews are scheduled with Mr. Daniel A. Williamson, former Corporation Counsel and Ms. Laddie Wyatt, long time former City Clerk. Attached as Exhibit A are the interview questions and a brief summary of the remarks of Mr. Williamson and Ms. Wyatt. Attached as Exhibit B are the interview questions and a brief summary of the remarks of Mr. West. A verbatim recording of the meeting is available upon request. Between the live interviews, Mr. Smiley acknowledged that Hon. Rebecca Williams, City Council Wards 2-3, Corporate Counsel David Minchello, and City Clerk Abubakar Jalloh were in attendance at the meeting. After the live interviews, the decision was made to play the recording of Mr. West's interview at another meeting, given the length of this meeting.

Correspondence to the Commission: Ms. Burgwinkle reported that there was no correspondence to the Commission; there was correspondence from the Commission to Mr. Restaino and a verbal response from Mr. Restaino. Ms. Burgwinkle requested deferring that discussion to the Treasurer Report.

Treasurer Report: Ms. Burgwinkle and Ms. Criscione reported that email had been sent to Mr. Restaino, inquiring about the status of the budget. Mr. Restaino subsequently called Ms. Burgwinkle, indicating that a budget amount of \$20,000 has been allocated, and that there will be one additional chance to request more when the budget comes before City Council. Ms. Burgwinkle remarked that CSC would price means of distributing the final report. For instance, we got a copy of the report of the Barnegat Charter Study Commission in 2005. They distributed by placing the report on line, placing a stack of reports in the City Clerk's Office, Library and Post Office, and by publishing it in the official newspaper. We are planning to price doing those things, to check to see if \$20,000 is adequate. As we anticipated, we have not spent any money yet.

Discussion of list of interviewees for the next meeting:

For the 4/11 meeting, Mr. Rowand Clark, former Corporation Counsel, Ms. Sandy Spector, Republican City Committee Chair, and Mr. Hank Kita, former City Administrator and member of the 1990 Charter Study Evaluation Committee are confirmed. Ms. Jewel Thompson-Chin will be interviewed in a subcommittee meeting in the City Hall Library at 6:00 pm on 4/11. Mr. Norton Bonaparte has requested a telephone interview which needs to be scheduled, need a volunteer to be the second subcommittee member.

Short Debriefing of Interviews: Mr. Stewart requested that Commissioner discuss what they learned from tonight's interviews. Ms. Burgwinkle mentioned learning about budget preparation and completion process from former Finance Director Mr. West. Mr. Smiley was interested in Ms. Wyatt's suggestions that the City Clerk's office should be elevated to a Department and that some of the statutory, non-union employees should be grouped together in the same section,

he had not thought of that until she mentioned it. Ms. Burgwinkle and Mr. Stewart mentioned that it was also interesting that Ms. Wyatt mentioned the New Jersey Statute providing that the governing body will appoint the Municipal Clerk. Ms Burgwinkle will bring a copy to the next meeting. CSC is not sure whether it supersedes our special charter, which is also a state statute.

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be on 4/11/13 at 7:30, with a subcommittee meeting at 6:00. Prior to adjourning, Ms. Burgwinkle distributed copies to the Commissioners of the Barnegat and Jackson Charter Study Committee Reports, as well as the Westfield, Montville and Gloucester City Special Charters. Also, Ms. Burgwinkle noted that Mr. Jalloh had provided a folder of City Clerk materials on charter study, including copies of the 1971-2 Charter Study Committee, and a 1983 press release about the 1982 Charter Study Feasibility Committee. The CSC was unaware of the existence of those committees prior to seeing this folder. CSC will work with the City Clerk to make sure that the reports are transmitted to the Plainfield Room at the Public Library. They are noteworthy as pieces of Plainfield history, and it is interesting to note the questions being asked about the charter in those documents. Ms. Burgwinkle will ask for subcommittee meeting with Chair to look at our remaining schedule, see if we need to add meetings.

Public Participation: No members of the public requested to be heard (observers were allowed to ask questions during the interviews).

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

A Full Length Recorded Copy of this Meeting is available by contacting the Charter Commissioners at <http://plainfieldcsc.blogspot.com/>.

Exhibit A

Following are interview questions and a brief summary of Mr. Williamson's and Ms. Wyatt's comments. A complete recording of the meeting and comments are available for review as described above.

1. Please briefly introduce yourself and describe your present or former role in Plainfield's government.

Mr. Williamson: Began working for the City in 1982 or 1983 as City Solicitor under Mayor Lattimore. Was elevated to Corporation Counsel and served Mayors Lattimore, Taylor and Mitchell. Worked for other organizations for a ten year period. Returned to work as Corporation Counsel under Mayor Robinson-Briggs in 2006, left in July 2012 to become Executive Director of PMUA.

Ms. Wyatt: Ms. Wyatt distributed a printed biographical statement that Mr. Smiley read into the record as follows: Laddie Wyatt-Twenty years of educational and administrative experience including management and supervision within all aspects of education, real estate sales, public relations, and local government has led to numerous recognitions for exercising leadership in establishing professional precepts. Laddie Wyatt has served as Chief Administrative Election Official, the Administrative Officer responsible for issuance of licenses and permits, Chief Registrar of municipal voters and Coordinator and Records Manager responsible for implementing local archives and records retention programs as mandated by law. As Certified Municipal Clerk, Laddie was responsible for coordinating, researching, developing and finalizing City Council agendas, preparing reports and committee agenda minutes and preparing resolutions as they relate to state statutes and codes. Among her many professional networks, Laddie has been president of the Union County Clerk's Association, a member of New Jersey League of Municipalities, the International Municipal Clerk's Association, State of New Jersey Clerk's Association, State Association Peer Learning Program, and the National League of Women Voters. Laddie has served as Municipal Clerk for the city of Plainfield since 1987, having completed Master Clerk Academy and ongoing continuous training as a Registered Municipal Clerk. Laddie resides in Plainfield. Ms. Wyatt added the following facts to her bio at the meeting as follows: She was the first African American appointed as City Clerk in Plainfield, and she has worked for 7 corporation counsel, 36 city councilors, 5 mayors and 7 city administrators.

2. To whom do you or did you report?

Mr. Williamson: Mayor and the City Council, as Charter specifies that Corporation Counsel is chief legal officer for both.

Ms. Wyatt: Reported to the Mayor, the City Council President and members and the City Administrator.

3. How frequently do you or did you meet with members of the governing body?

Mr. Williamson: Went to City Council meetings, scheduled and special, as well as Council Committee meetings

Ms. Wyatt: Every week

4. If you are or were involved in budgeting for your department or division, describe the budget process.

Mr. Williamson: Took a good look at the previous year, then looked at outstanding litigation and other matters, spoke with Department Heads affected by his budget, and then defended before the City Council.

Ms. Wyatt: The budget process for Division heads was that you got a wish list, wrote down what you wanted, and returned it to the City Administrator, who discussed it with the Director of Finance. Then it was discussed with the Mayor, then presented it to the City Council.

5. Do you or did you have any contact with your counterparts in other municipalities? How often and in what context?

Mr. Williamson: Very rarely. If he attended League of Municipalities, there were meetings with other lawyers talking about what was going on in the other towns and sharing information.

Ms. Wyatt: Quite often. As Chairman the Peer Learning Program, matched new clerks with more senior clerks who could teach them.

6. Have you read Plainfield's City Charter?

Mr. Williamson: Not fluidly, disjointedly over the years. Sure he has seen all of the provisions over the years. Has not sat down and read it.

Ms. Wyatt: Yes

7. What do you consider to be the most important advantages of Plainfield's present form of local government, the Plainfield City Charter? What are its disadvantages, in your opinion?

Mr. Williamson: Advantage: Notion that we have home rule and can control our destiny, so long as consistent with State law. Section 1.5, Powers, lays out the rules of governance over the town. Disadvantage: Somewhat inflexible, tedious process to amend it as it is a state statute, passed by the legislature.

Ms. Wyatt: Does not know if she can define what is good and bad, because she worked with it all these years. She feels that the Charter should define the Mayor's role, the City Council's role and the City Clerk's role more specifically. Charter should define exactly how far the Mayor can and cannot go, it should state exactly what the Mayor is responsible for, too broad now. Actually, the Charter does say that the mayor can only do specific things, but the interpretation of different people who read the Charter go beyond the restrictions in the Charter, in her opinion.

8. Is there anything in the Plainfield City Charter that hindered you from carrying out your role in Plainfield's government?

Mr. Williamson: Yes, the inherent conflict in trying to be the legal advisor to both Mayor and City Council. Works well when everyone is getting along. Clients can lose confidence in what you propose.

Ms. Wyatt: Not posed to Ms. Wyatt

9. If your answer to Question 8 was yes, were the provisions of the Plainfield City Charter the problem or do you believe that the Charter was being interpreted incorrectly?

Mr. Williamson: Question not posed to Mr. Williamson.

Ms. Wyatt: Question not posed to Ms. Wyatt.

10. If you have had experience with forms of municipal government other than Plainfield's City Charter, how did the operation of the municipal government under those forms compare?

Mr. Williamson: Has not been involved with other forms.

Ms. Wyatt: No, they basically follow the Faulkner.

11. What is your opinion on the number of City Council members under the Plainfield City Charter? Is the City Council too large or too small?

Should there be one City Councilor from each ward, and three elected at large from the whole City, rather than 1-4, 2-3 and one at large?

Should all City Councilors be elected at large?

Mr. Williamson: He thinks that this is a political question, not a legal or analytical question about the Charter. Seven City Councilors works for him. Success depends on people's attitudes and agendas, and the same issues would be presented regardless of the number of people.

Ms. Wyatt: Present form is fine. Before this Charter, the City had 11 council members (this is 1957 or 1958), and the Council had standing committees that followed the divisions. They operated like the school board. One committee was personnel, one was purchasing, for instance. They would place items on the agenda to approve vacations and raises, for instance, before the committee of the whole. Councilors who were heads of committees would meet at a table like this and decide what to do about requests that would be put on agenda to approve. Under the new charter, the council was reduced to 7 and gave up their administrative duties, and they were assigned to the City Administrator.

12. Should City Councilors be compensated or should they receive \$1 per year for their services as in some other municipalities? Should the council receive benefits?

Mr. Williamson: Arguments for both sides, but no one should forget how important and time consuming the jobs are. He has no opinion which is better or worse.

Ms. Wyatt: Yes, most City Councilors in New Jersey and other states are paid a fee. Years ago, when the city was run by wealthy people who worked in New York and lived here, they worked for \$1 or for free, they were volunteers, but that was before 1957.

13. In your opinion, should the City Clerk, who acts as clerk of the City Council, be appointed by the Mayor or by the City Council?

Mr. Williamson: City Clerk serves both administrative responsibilities and City Council. Charter says Mayor appoints, with advice and consent of City Council. He does not see a problem with that.

Ms. Wyatt: City Clerk should be appointed by the council as the statute provides, that is for the whole state of New Jersey, it is the law. When this charter was written, the duties had not expanded the way that they have today. You have to be very educated to be a City Clerk today, cannot be a City Clerk until you pass the state exam. New Jersey is the only state that mandates a state exam, must be a Certified Clerk and a Registered Municipal Clerk in New Jersey. Must have continuous studies to keep the certification, every two years you have to take a certain amount of credits. As this Charter is written, the Mayor appoints the City Clerk, but the statute provides that the Council sets the salary and should appoint the City Clerk. City Council is not aware of this. Over the years, they were so unaware of their real legislative powers and duties, they looked to the attorney to tell them what their rights were. Very important to for all City Councilors to focus on taking the required courses that are offered.

14. Do you think that the Plainfield City Charter could be improved in any way that would enhance the working relationship between the Mayor and City Council?

Mr. Williamson: Does not think that the document would make a difference. Depends on the people in the jobs. Both sides need to understand that there is a need to compromise, this was how the country was founded, and that when there is compromise, neither side gets everything that it wants.

Ms. Wyatt: Very much like Mr. Williamson said, but again, must define the duties of the Mayor and the Council. Also, City Clerk is in this organization as a Division Head, should be a Department Head. Every other municipality in New Jersey, has City Clerk as a Department Head. Cannot do anything in a town without the City Clerk signing off and making it official. City Clerk is involved on the administrative end on the Mayor's side, with the City seal, contracts and documentation and on the Council side on the legislative body of the agenda, but also in purchasing, contracts, planning, everything. City Clerk needs to know everything that is going on in town, or you do not get things done. The City does not get a two volume code book without a lot of work. Getting back to the budget and the City Clerk, Plainfield is the only municipality that does not appreciate the City Clerk, and what they have to do. All other towns involve them more. This is a town that likes to have power and does not want to share it. City Clerk is viewed as a threat. City Clerk can get into a bad position because of reporting to both Mayor and Council when the two sides are not getting along. Clerk is so involved in everything in the city, does many jobs that neither Mayor or City Council have knowledge of, but it all gets done. If you do your job correctly, and if you walk a straight line, and if you don't favor one any more than another, you are still not going to be liked and may not be trusted. I feel that City Clerk belongs to the Council.

15. The Plainfield City Charter provides for three City Departments, Administration and Finance, Public Works and Public Affairs and Safety.

(a) Do you believe that the current city divisions are assigned to the appropriate Departments for peak efficiency?

(b) Should the Plainfield City Charter be changed to allow for between 3 and 6 Departments, to be established by ordinance?

(c) Does Plainfield need the Department of Public Affairs and Safety in its current form?

Mr. Williamson: (a) Probably no, only three departments, Administration has a slew of divisions, so if there is a change in the Charter, this is probably a topic for change. (b) Answer is probably yes, but someone would need to sit down and analyze the situation and figure out the right number of Departments and the assignment of the divisions. Cannot do that now, as there are only 3 allowed. (c) He believes yes, some civilian input is important, monitoring the uniformed forces and action. The person running that department must have a good understanding of the underlying operations.

Ms. Wyatt: Department of Administration and Finance contains the Tax Assessor, Tax Collector and Chief Finance Officer. Those are three protected statutory positions, because of the jobs they do, along with the City Clerk. They do not belong in that Department, or any Department for fear that they will be asked to do favors for or be influenced by local officials. She was in that Department when she started, but proved her point that the City Clerk did not belong there.

16. Do you believe that the Office of Corporation Counsel can properly represent both the Mayor and City Council as provided in the Plainfield City Charter? Should there be a provision for separate counsel for the governing body? Should there be full time in-house Corporation Counsel?

Mr. Williamson: Full time corporation counsel came about due to the thought that it would be less expensive. However, in-house counsel cannot do everything, so outside counsel needs to be engaged. He does not know which is better. Regarding the conflict, a Corporation Counsel can represent both, but sometimes there is an appearance of conflict of interest, hard to represent both and be credible to both. He believes that the City Council can engage its own counsel, but who is in charge then? Need to do an ordinance regarding authority of Corporation Counsel over that person.

Ms. Wyatt: Position of in-house corporation counsel came through in 1988 or 1989. Joe Scott always wanted in-house counsel, they talked about it over and over, thought that it would save money. That remains to be seen, but, the first full time in house counsel position was created while Al McWilliams was Mayor. As far as the Corporation Counsel position, after it started, the City Administrator is not being recognized as it should be. City Administrator is in charge of the day to day operations of the city. Complaints and Problems in the City should be addressed to the City Administrator, who would then go to Corporation Counsel if he or she needs advice. This is how it was always done. You did not have all of this serving two masters if you were Corporation Counsel, because you did not have City Council members going to Corporation Counsel directly, this should be accomplished by going to the City Administrator.

17. The Plainfield City Charter provides for initiative and referendum upon petitions with signatures of 20% of registered city voters, and for recall of elected officials with signatures of 33 1/3 % of registered voters. Should the Plainfield City Charter be amended to follow the Faulkner Act (10%-15% of voters who voted in the last election for initiative and referendum under circumstances described in the law and 25% for recall)? Should the recall percentage be less than 25%?

Mr. Williamson: Does not know the answer, but would be wary of tampering with this. Some people are never happy, and you would not want to interfere with governance. If that percentage was lowered too much so that people could do this willy nilly, not a good thing. Numbers were designed so that it is possible, but not easy to do these things.

Ms. Wyatt: There is a statutory requirement for that, she has completed recalls, had to go by the statutory number.

18. In your opinion, should Plainfield have more or fewer Wards? Would more or fewer Wards provide better representation for all constituencies?

Mr. Williamson: Does not know the answer, political question.

Ms Wyatt: It should stay the same.

19. What is your opinion of non-partisan local elections (for Mayor and City Council) rather than primaries and partisan local elections?

Mr. Williamson: Does not make a difference, problems that exist under partisan would be bigger under non-partisan, this is a political question. He is a creature of habit, used to partisan approach, acknowledges that both have problems.

Ms. Wyatt: Has no opinion.

20. How does the Plainfield City Charter work with the Plainfield Municipal Code? Were they used together consistently in your experience? If NO, what is your recommendation?

Mr. Williamson: Code is the working document that interprets the Charter, he believes that most of the Code is consistent with the charter, which is very broad. Corporation Counsel's responsibility to make sure that the ordinances are consistent with the Charter.

Ms. Wyatt: They work pretty closely, have to look to Charter to refine certain ordinances.

21. Are there any provisions of the Plainfield City Charter that you think can be improved? If so what do you suggest?

Mr. Williamson: "Improving" is subjective, not sure he is qualified to say, but the inherent conflicts for Corporation Counsel and the City Clerk are possibilities.

Ms. Wyatt: Bring the role of the City Clerk more effectively into the administration

22. Do you have any other observations that you would like to share about the provisions of Plainfield City Charter?

Mr. Williamson: No.

Ms. Wyatt: No.

Note from CSC on Mr. Wyatt's interview: The day after the above interview, Ms. Wyatt contacted the CSC Secretary to make sure that she adequately explained her position on operation of the City on a day to day basis under the Charter. She emphasized that the Charter calls for a full time professional City Administrator to handle operation of the City on a day to day basis. It also contemplates a part time Mayor, who should not encroach upon the responsibilities of the City Administrator.

Exhibit B

Former Director of Finance, Ronald West, was interviewed in a CSC subcommittee meeting held at 6:00 pm on Thursday, 3-28-13. Commissioners Mary Burgwinkle and John Stewart were present.

1. Please briefly introduce yourself and describe your present or former role in Plainfield's government.

Served as Director of Administration, Finance, Health and Social Services and Technology from 2003 to the end of 2005.

2. To whom do you or did you report?

Reported to City Administrator, but also worked closely with the Mayor.

3. How frequently do you or did you meet with members of the governing body?

At least once a week; attended council and other meetings and certain of the Councilors stopped by on a regular basis to discuss matters and get a better understanding of things.

4. If you are or were involved in budgeting for your department or division, describe the budget process.

He asked Departments to do zero based budgeting rather than putting an incremental increase over the prior year budget. He wanted them to start from scratch and think about the upcoming year. Also worked with Mayor and City Administrator on what he called the Budget Call, which was their key strategic and tactical goals for that budget including raises, hiring, other spending possibilities. During his first year, Plainfield was in a budget crisis, looking at a 15% increase, so he did not focus on getting the budget done early. The next year he introduced an early start to the budget. Plainfield was on a fiscal year then, so the budget preparation started in March and was essentially done by the beginning of the next fiscal year. Also took a multi-year approach, looked forward a year or two, for the purpose of being able to get a trend on the future tax rate. Also looked at future capital needs (like police cars, roads, a technology plan) to get an idea what we needed to do in the city to make a difference and tighten up finances. Also looked for "low hanging fruit" to raise revenue. Plainfield owned some properties that were not being used, so an effort was made to market them. The tax sale foreclosure process was speeded up, and the City took ownership of some properties that had not paid taxes in as much as 20 years.

5. Do you or did you have any contact with your counterparts in other municipalities? How often and in what context?

Not often, but did participate in the Municipal Managers Association, as City Administrator was president. He reached out to them and other municipalities to get copies of ordinances or procedures.

6. Have you read Plainfield's City Charter?

Yes, once again.

7. What do you consider to be the most important advantages of Plainfield's present form of local government, the Plainfield City Charter?

What are its disadvantages, in your opinion?

He views the Charter as a form of government that sets up and separates the executive, legislative and administrative branches and that worked fine when he was working for the City. The important thing is to have everyone working together for the betterment of Plainfield. There was a good attitude during his time as a City employee, with the Mayor, the City Council and municipal employees all working together.

8. Is there anything in the Plainfield City Charter that hindered you from carrying out your role in Plainfield's government?

No.

9. If your answer to Question 8 was yes, were the provisions of the Plainfield City Charter the problem or do you believe that the Charter was being interpreted incorrectly?

n/a

10. If you have had experience with forms of municipal government other than Plainfield's City Charter, how did the operation of the municipal government under those forms compare?

No other municipal government experience.

11. What is your opinion on the number of City Council members under the Plainfield City Charter? Is the City Council too large or too small?

Should there be one City Councilor from each ward, and three elected at large from the whole City, rather than 1-4, 2-3 and one at large?

Should all City Councilors be elected at large?

He thinks that the current structure works. The challenge faced by the City, in his opinion, is that everyone needs to align themselves for the overall common good and work together. There is too much infighting, should be less political and about the overall good for the City.

12. Should City Councilors be compensated or should they receive \$1 per year for their services as in some other municipalities? Should the council receive benefits?

In his opinion, City Councilors work hard. They are expected to do a lot, and be out in community; what they receive is a small token for what they do. Benefits are a different issue. He thinks that they are too rich in general, and should be looked at along with municipal employee salaries in order to take the tax burden into consideration.

13. In your opinion, should the City Clerk, who acts as clerk of the City Council, be appointed by the Mayor or by the City Council?

He is of mixed opinion on this, and he views the City Clerk as a State level employee in any event. The Clerk's role expands far beyond just the City Council. When you look at the function, he thinks that the Mayor should likely appoint, but in the context of the City Clerk as a state employee for all practical purposes.

14. Do you think that the Special Charter could be improved in any way that would enhance the working relationship between the Mayor and City Council?

This issue is not about the charter. What needs to happen going forward is a formal commitment by the executive and legislature to identify the highest priorities for the city, work together to get them done, with performance metrics to demonstrate to the rest of the city how they are doing.

15. The Plainfield City Charter provides for three City Departments, Administration and Finance, Public Works and Public Affairs and Safety.

(a) Do you believe that the current city divisions are assigned to the appropriate Departments for peak efficiency?

(b) Should the Plainfield City Charter be changed to allow for between 3 and 6 Departments, to be established by ordinance?

(c) Does Plainfield need the Department of Public Affairs and Safety in its current form?

He thinks that the 3 departments were fine, with some challenges. One was that recreation never seemed to fit within Public Works, another was that when he was Administration and Finance Director he had 11 direct reports in divisions, which is on the brink of unmanageable. It worked, but

with reliance on the divisions to carry out their tasks, and with performance based objectives and metrics to make sure that jobs were getting done. Does not believe that we need to go to up to 6 by ordinance. The most challenging is the Director of Public Safety. The position is the right position, someone needs to be supervising police and fire, but the issue is whether that person needs to have police experience. He thinks that any good manager could do the job, make the business decisions necessary and work closely with the operations.

16. Do you believe that the Office of Corporation Counsel can properly represent both the Mayor and City Council as provided in the Plainfield City Charter? Should there be a provision for separate counsel for the governing body? Should there be full time in-house Corporation Counsel?
He believes that Corporation Counsel can represent both. Special Counsel can be placed on board when necessary. Everyone should be working together. Does not think that governing body should have its own counsel, waste of money. His experience was that full time corporation counsel in place when he worked for the city had a lot of work on the table at all times, approached it with rigor.

17. The Plainfield City Charter provides for initiative and referendum upon petitions with signatures of 20% of registered city voters, and for recall of elected officials with signatures of 33 1/3 % of registered voters. Should the Plainfield City Charter be amended to follow the Faulkner Act (10%-15% of voters who voted in the last election for initiative and referendum under circumstances described in the law and 25% for recall)? Should the recall percentage be less than 25%?

He does not want this to be easy. All are serious steps, do not water down, stay with high % of voters.

18. In your opinion, should Plainfield have more or fewer Wards? Would more or fewer Wards provide better representation for all constituencies?

If you have good City Council people who are actively involved and having meetings in neighborhoods to see about issues, status quo should be fine. Citizens should be holding City Councilors accountable, no need for more wards.

19. What is your opinion of non-partisan local elections (for Mayor and City Council) rather than primaries and partisan local elections?
Non partisan makes no sense to him; partisan elections are the American way, works for him.

20. How does the Plainfield City Charter work with the Plainfield Municipal Code? Were they used together consistently in your experience? If NO, what is your recommendation?

Used the Code far more than the Charter. The Code, along with state regulations, gave him the guidance he needed.

21. Are there any provisions of the Plainfield City Charter that you think can be improved? If so what do you suggest?

Does not think that any provisions are not working to the point that they need to be improved. He thinks that citizens should hold elected officials accountable, not change the Charter. Government should be transparent and letting people know when they can expect changes to happen.

22. Do you have any other observations that you would like to share about the provisions of the Plainfield City Charter?

Thinks that the Charter works. This Commission is a wonderful way of gathering information to see if it needs to be changed. Everyone should work together and elected officials should be held accountable.