

# BALTIMORE CITY COUNCIL



## CHARTER REVIEW SPECIAL COMMITTEE

*LO25-0038*  
*Charter Review*

# Public Testimony

*March 5, 2026 - March 18, 2026*

**CITY OF BALTIMORE**

Brandon M. Scott – Mayor  
Zeke Cohen – Council President



**Office of Council Services**

Nancy Mead - Director  
100 Holliday Street, Room 415  
Baltimore, MD 21202

**CHARTER REVIEW SPECIAL COMMITTEE**

**The Honorable Ryan Dorsey  
CHAIR**

**Attendance Sheet**

3/18/2026

LO25-0038  
Charter Review

<b>SIGN IN TO TESTIFY</b>			Position:		Check if Baltimore City lobbyist*
FIRST NAME	LAST NAME	ORGANIZATION AND/OR CONTACT INFORMATION	SUPPORT	OPPOSE	
DAN	FLOYD	<del>XXXXXXXXXX</del> JOADLFLOYD@ <sup>Indep.</sup> CML	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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From: Jody Landers

Sent: Friday, March 6, 2026 6:27:51 PM

To: Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>; rdorsey <Ryan.Dorsey@baltimorecity.gov>; Bullock, John (City Council) <John.Bullock@baltimorecity.gov>; Blanchard, Zachary (City Council) <zachary.blanchard@baltimorecity.gov>; Ramos, Odette (City Council) <Odette.Ramos@baltimorecity.gov>; Jones, Jermaine (City Council) <jermaine.jones@baltimorecity.gov>

Cc: Parker, Mark (City Council) <mark.parker@baltimorecity.gov>; McCray, Danielle (City Council) <Danielle.McCray@baltimorecity.gov>; Conway, Mark (City Council) <Mark.Conway@baltimorecity.gov>; Schleifer, Isaac (City Council) <Isaac.Schleifer@baltimorecity.gov>; Middleton, Sharon (City Council) <Sharon.Middleton@baltimorecity.gov>; Torrence, James (City Council) <James.Torrence@baltimorecity.gov>; Gray, Paris (City Council) <Paris.Gray@baltimorecity.gov>; Porter, Phylicia R.L. (City Council) <Phylicia.Porter@baltimorecity.gov>; Glover, Antonio (City Council) <Antonio.Glover@baltimorecity.gov>

Subject: Critique and Proposal for the Charter Review Committee to consider

Mr. President, Mr. Chair and Members of the Charter Review Committee,

It was clear to me from attending the first listening session of the Charter Review Committee that Councilman Dorsey has a clear idea of the provisions that he would like to remove from the Charter. However, other than removing Charter required functions and placing them under legislative control of the City Council, there was no clear articulation of what controls or limitations would be applied to the Council's expanded governance role.

The Charter, being the people's governing document, is meant to place constraints on the Board of Estimates and the Mayor and City Council's exercise of governing powers. That's the reason that changes to the Charter must go to the voters for approval. The fact that the Mayor and City Council feel constrained by certain Charter provisions is precisely the reason these provisions are in the Charter, as opposed to being legislative mandates or ordinances. Ordinances simply require a majority vote of the Council and the Mayor's signature to become law and they can be reversed quickly with less transparency than the process required for charter amendments.

The Charter is under the control of the voters, whereas the legislative process is solely under the purview of the Mayor and City Council. Recent legislative actions concerning zoning and land use issues, think 25-0064, 25-0065 and 25-0066, have demonstrated that the Mayor and Council can willfully and disdainfully disregard the concerns and objections of many City residents, by limiting public debate and rushing controversial laws through the legislative process. This mode of governing only undermines public trust and confidence in City government generally and particularly in the City Council.

By failing to thoroughly define what procedures and restrictions the Committee would substitute for Charter provisions the Committee wishes to remove, the Committee is not serving the best interests of Council or the Citizens. The current Charter provisions require a level of constraint

and transparency that appears to be missing from the discussion taking place in the Council Charter Review Committee.

If the Council wishes to vest itself with more power and “governing flexibility”, as Chairman Dorsey likes to characterize it, then the Committee should seriously entertain drafting a Charter Amendment that will allow the Mayor and individual councilmembers to be subject to a recall vote. Allowing for a recall, outside of the four-year election cycle, is a provision that I think a large majority of the voters would like and approve.

Therefore, I would respectfully request that the Committee add a recall amendment to the measures that it is considering, most of which appear to be centered on the Council taking more power for itself and removing certain provisions from under the direct control of the voters. Thank you for your consideration.

Jody Landers  
Lifelong 3rd District Resident

Remember to be kind!

From: Carolyn Carey  
Sent: Wednesday, March 18, 2026 6:14 AM  
To: Charter Review Committee (City Council) <charter.review.committee@baltimorecity.gov>  
Cc: Cohen, Zeke (City Council) <Zeke.Cohen@baltimorecity.gov>  
Subject: Public Comment on Charter Review Process

03/18/26

Dear Members of the Charter Review Special Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the Baltimore City Charter review process. While I understand that the City Council must legally draft and place charter amendments on the ballot, describing this effort as “community driven” requires broad and equitable public access.

Baltimore has 14 council districts, yet only five public listening sessions were scheduled. No session was clearly located in East Baltimore, and the March 16 session was canceled without a replacement. This significantly limited in person participation, particularly for residents facing transportation or technology barriers.

Given the long term impact of charter changes, I respectfully urge the Committee to expand and rebalance public input opportunities, including rescheduling the canceled session and holding additional meetings in underserved areas.

Respectfully submitted,  
Carolyn Carey