



Village of Minerva Park

Are you interested in shaping the future of Minerva Park?

Village Council is exploring the possibility of developing a charter for Minerva Park, and we need residents to be involved. Read on for more information!

What is a charter?

A charter serves as a local constitution. Through a charter, citizens can establish their municipality's framework for local government as well as define a range of local powers such as those related to bidding and purchasing, staffing, and more.

What does Minerva Park have now?

We are a non-chartered village, which means we are subject to the general statutes established by state law. While we have some home rule authority (which allows us some leeway on certain "substantive" local matters), we are limited in many ways by the laws set by the Ohio Legislature.

How does the charter process work?

There are a number of steps to get started:

- First, council will vote on whether to put the question of forming a charter commission on the ballot. A two-thirds affirmative vote of the members is required. Citizens may also petition to place the issue on the ballot.
- If Council approves the resolution this summer, the question will appear on the ballot in November 2018, and voters will decide if they want to go forward with forming a charter commission.
- The charter commission is comprised of 15 residents of the Village, who would run for seats on the commission. They would appear on the November 2018 ballot.
- If the vote is in favor of forming a charter commission, then the group will begin meeting as soon as possible to get to work.
- The commission will then begin drafting a charter for Minerva Park. It must be ready in time for voters to review the proposed charter and cast their votes in the November 2019 election.
- If the vote is against forming a charter commission, then the votes for the commission members will be disregarded and no commission will be formed. Minerva Park would remain a non-charter village governed by Ohio statutes.

What are the advantages of a charter?

Having a charter expands and solidifies a municipality's local powers. It exemplifies grassroots democracy, as citizens at the local level decide how their local government works.

A charter also:

Empowers the community to define its government structure. In general, for villages without a charter, state law provides for a mayor plus a six-member council, with executive power vested in the mayor. There may be other elected or appointed positions (a fiscal officer, for example). With a charter, the voters decide the structure of government. The options are varied: elected council + elected mayor; hired manager + elected council; hired manager + elected mayor and council, and so on. Terms, appointments, powers, and duties can be established through the charter.

Enables the Village to establish its own procedures. The term "procedures" is quite broad. It can encompass bidding requirements, how the Village incurs debt, matters of taxation, the process for acquiring and disposing of equipment, and much more.

What are the disadvantages of a charter?

There's always a risk in trying something new, and some might argue, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." Developing a charter requires collaboration from a group of residents who may not see eye-to-eye on everything. There will be some cost, mostly from added legal fees.

What rules will charter commission members follow?

- All meetings of the charter commission are subject to Ohio's Sunshine Laws and open meeting requirements.
- Elected commission members must follow legal requirements, including completing candidate nominating petitions and campaign finance reports. They will also take an oath of office.
- The process requires a one-year commitment from members.

What if something isn't covered in the charter?

For matters not addressed specifically by the charter, state statute will apply. For example, if the charter commission decides not to include language about the bidding on big projects, then the Village will continue to follow the process outlined in state law.

Where can I see examples of other charters?

Lots of Ohio municipalities have charters, and many of them are available through their websites. The Ohio City/County Management Association also has a link to a number of city and village charters: <http://www.ocmaohio.org/2179/Charters>

Want to know more?

We are planning brief information sessions at the Community Building on the following dates/times:

July 11th 7pm

July 15th 2pm

July 22nd 2 pm

Feel free to contact Jennifer Pauken, Legislative Chair at jpauken@minervapark.org or 614-891-5880 with questions.