

Dear City Council Members,

My name is Rick Cordner. I live in North Venice. I am here today to express my personal opposition to the proposed referendum to end the annual election cycle.

In 2023, two candidates for City Council "signed" the Clean Campaign pledge. By doing so, they affirmed they would not be beholden to developer interests. They were elected. The voters were able to accomplish this in a non-partisan fashion in part because the election was an off-year election. - when local issues are not drowned out by national partisan issues.

Fast forward a year. The City Council is now proposing to eliminate the annual election cycle and replace it with even-numbered year elections only, to align with State & National Elections. The proposed Charter Amendment is being hastily promoted without the customary review and recommendation of the Charter Review Committee.

Why is this critically important change being promoted? The City Council would have us believe it has nothing to do with the results of the 2023 elections. There has been no cogent argument forthcoming to support this important change to our election cycle. Are there any groups or individuals clamoring for this change? Have they submitted a petition?

As part of the transition to four-year terms, three council members get one year added to their term in office. Instead of serving three years they now get to serve a 4-year term. How can this be? The voters only elected them to a 3-year term. As a consequence, these council members will not have to run for election in 2025, an odd-numbered year. Was this part of the calculus? Are they concerned about their electoral prospects in 2025?

What also concerns me - the unearned bonus year for the three council members is not fully disclosed. The bonus year is not mentioned in the proposed referendum going to the voters. In fact, it is only mentioned in exhibit B as an attachment to the Ordinance. How many voters will read that?

With all due respect, I think your actions are truly shameless and unconscionable. For those three council members getting a bonus year, your actions are also self-serving. At a minimum you should recuse yourselves from voting. Please, please reconsider what you are doing.

My view could change if this proposal was (1) first reviewed and recommended by the Charter Review Board and (2) revised to eliminate the "bonus" year during the transition i.e. council members will serve out their current terms that they were elected to.

P.S. If this Ordinance passes, this issue will help galvanize the voters this coming November.

Thank you.

*Rick Cordner*  
6/11/2024