



# ARTICLE VII

## Citizen Participation

*This is a new article.*



# INTENT

- ❖ To provide opportunities for citizen participation in the governance process
- ❖ To detail the procedures for Citizen Initiative and Referendum
- ❖ To provide for periodic Charter Reviews



# Section Descriptions

- Section 7.01 Advisory Boards: Language is basically unchanged in the revised Charter from Section 77 of the city's current Charter. The City Commission has wide latitude in creating advisory boards and in determining how they function. No compensation is given to those serving.
- Section 7.02 pertains to Charter Amendments. The current Charter indicates that F.S. 166.031 provides for this process and this is confirmed in the revised Charter
- Section 7.03 is new language providing for a Charter review in 2026 and every ten years thereafter. This section also provides for representation from each Zone on the charter review committee.
- Section 7.04 is absent any substantive language inasmuch as the process for Recall is provided in F.S. 100.361, as amended.

# Section Descriptions

- Section 7.05 guarantees the right of citizens to initiate ordinances for a vote by the city's electors. This section also guarantees the right of citizens to petition for a referendum on an existing ordinance. Both the Initiative and the Referendum exclude fiduciary matters such as taxes and salaries.
  - a) provides that any five qualified voters may commence either an initiative or referendum through the City Clerk's office by following steps outlined in this section
  - b) defines the disposition of petitions in four subsections:
    - ✚ 10% of the total number of registered voters at the last city election must sign a petition for it to move forward.
    - ✚ the form of the petition and the manner in which it is to be signed are set forth;
    - ✚ the circulator must sign an affidavit that he/she witnessed each signature.
    - ✚ there is a time limit on gathering the petition signatures.

# Section Descriptions

- c) specifies the filing process with the City Clerk including the eventuality of an insufficiency in meeting the requirements of the petition gathering process such as failure to meet the 10% requirement of signers. This section also provides for Commission review as well as Court review when a petition insufficiency has been determined by the City Clerk.
- d) provides for the suspension of an ordinance that was the subject of a referendum filed with the City Clerk. This section also provides for circumstances that would prevent the City Commission from validating the petitions.
- e) describes the action taken by the City Commission when a petition has been considered sufficient. If the Commission either fails to repeal the ordinance within 30 days or to adopt a new ordinance within 60 days, the ordinance is referred to the voters of the city; if a vote by the electors is required, the Commission has a time limit of 180 days to hold an election; a petition can also be withdrawn but no later than 15 days before the scheduled election.
- f) summarizes how the Commission must respond to election outcomes by either an Initiative or a Referendum. If a majority vote favors an ordinance initiated by citizens, it is immediately adopted. If a majority vote in a referendum defeats an ordinance, it is immediately repealed.



# Additions & Deletions

- Sections 7.01 is the only section of Article VII that is unchanged from the current Charter
- Sections 7.02 and 7.04 both confirm that Florida statutes guide the Charter Review process and the Recall process
- Section Sections 7.03 and 7.05 are both new.