

August 21, 2025

Honorable Fred Cleveland  
Mayor of New Smyrna Beach

Dear Mayor Cleveland, City Commission, and Mr. Cowper:

My correspondence with you is in my capacity as the chair of the New Smyrna Beach Charter Review Committee.

May I start by expressing my sincere appreciation for you, each of our commissioners, and city staff who serve our great community with pride and commitment.

The purpose for my letter to you today is to share my perspective as the committee chair on the decision of the City Council held on August 12, 2025, to remove the proposal from the commission agenda without discussion or vote neither for approval nor rejection.

The City Council decided to conduct a charter review of the City of New Smyrna Beach and then appointed eleven members of our community, across all four zones, to serve the role as members of the charter review committee. I was appointed to the committee by Zone 3 Commissioner, Jason McGuirk. My colleagues on the committee chose me to serve as the committee chair, to which I am honored. We voted to have an early election and bring this issue to the public now. Please reconsider your decision.

Our committee worked with zeal and esprit de corps to thoughtfully sort through key topics which exist in our current charter. During each meeting we deliberately paused to intently hear the comments of the general public that attended to express his/her point of view. We took each of these comments into account as we deliberated on each item/proposal that was presented to our City Commission.

Of important note, each item that was presented was recommended by an overwhelming majority of our committee members.

As such, I feel a duty to share with you that it seems the most appropriate course of action is for the wonderful residents of our great city of New Smyrna Beach to have an opportunity to decide at the voting polls as to the utility and value of each of the seven proposed edits the committee has submitted for your consideration this year.

It is reasonable for an elected official to agree and/or disagree with the content of the changes. However, it seems the real question here is, "If you asked us to perform the work now, why not complete the task by allowing the voters to decide now?"

My preference would be to share the contents of the letter during public comments during the next commission meeting. However, I will be unavailable as I am out of town.

I sincerely appreciate your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Billings  
128 Mangrove Estates Circle  
New Smyrna Beach, Florida