

Approved
2/12/26

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
Thursday, February 5, 2026, | 5:30 PM
Penn Room, Reading City Hall, 1st Floor
815 Washington St, Reading, PA 19601**

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Pastor Evelyn Morrison at 5:38 p.m.

I. Pledge of Allegiance

II. Moment of Silence or Prayer

III. Roll Call

The following Members were in attendance: Chair, Pastor Evelyn Morrison, David Myers, Ann Sheehan, Jonathan Mejia, Virna Quinones, Debra Bradford (via Zoom) and Tanya Melendez (via Zoom). Claudette Bullock joined the meeting via Zoom at 6:31 p.m.

Members absent were Carlos Rivera and Sheila Perez.

Staff present: Edwin L. Stock, Esquire, Solicitor.

There were a sufficient number of members present to establish a quorum.

IV. Public Comments - Agenda Related

There were no public comments.

V. Opening Remarks – Chair

The Chair asked every member of the Charter Review Commission to provide written feedback on the Charter Review Commission process, which feedback would be made part of the Charter Review Commission's final report.

Mr. Myers made a motion to approve the Minutes for the January 29, 2026 meeting. Ms. Bradford seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0.

VI. Meeting Schedule

The upcoming meetings are February 12, 2026; February 19, 2026 and February 26, 2026.

VII. Discussion of Next Priorities & Work Plan

(a) Review of Survey Results.

No action.

(b) Consideration of Referendum Questions/Approval of Referendum Questions

Mr. Mejia presented a revised Referenced Question regarding forensic audits. The proposed question reads as follows:

“Shall the Home Rule Charter Article IX Financial Procedures be amended to authorize the City Auditor to conduct independent forensic audits of all City departments, boards, and authorities in every Mayoral term?”

Ms. Quinones made a motion to approve this questions. Ms. Bradford seconded the motion. By role call vote, all members present voted “Yes” and the motion was adopted.

There was a robust discussion regarding the issue of toxic trespass. The Chair suggested adopting a toxic trespass policy. The Chair handed out two documents, which are attached hereto, regarding proposed referendum questions.

During this discussion, the Chair permitted Maria Ferrary, a citizen to speak. Ms. Ferrary is deeply involved in environmental issues and has experienced tragic family difficulties because of environmental issues. Ms. Ferrary believes the toxic trespass policy is very important and that the policy could help establish sustainability and protect the health of human beings.

Mr. Mejia made a motion to approve the official ballot question presented by the Chair. Ms. Sheehan seconded the motion. After further robust discussion, Mr. Mejia withdrew the motion. The consensus seemed to be to attempt to rework the wording of a proposed ballot questions.

The solicitor was directed to provide research on federal and state environmental laws.

(c) Consideration of Department of Health.
No further action was taken.

(d) Consideration of Toxic Trespass.
See above.

VIII. Public Comments – General

There were no public comments.

IX. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

Option A — Clean and comprehensive (recommended)

Distributed by
E. Morrison on
2/5

Shall the Home Rule Charter of the Reading be amended by adding a new provision in Article XI ("Citizens' Rights and Participation") to establish a "Freedom from Toxic Trespass" right protecting residents and the local environment from industrial poisoning; prohibit toxic trespass; require full disclosure of potentially toxic materials before City permits are issued; impose accountability for violations; and create a City-appointed Environmental Advocate authorized to review and localize permitting decisions and to propose legal actions to prevent or stop violations of this right?

Option B — Shorter, tighter (if you need fewer words)

Shall the Home Rule Charter of the Reading be amended to add a "Freedom from Toxic Trespass" provision that prohibits toxic trespass and industrial poisoning; requires disclosure of potentially toxic materials before permits are issued; holds violators accountable; and creates a City-appointed Environmental Advocate with authority to propose legal action to prevent or stop violations and to strengthen local control over permitting of potentially toxic activities?

Option C — Most plain-language (max voter clarity)

Shall the Home Rule Charter of the ~~Reading~~ be amended to protect residents' right to be free from industrial poisoning by banning "toxic trespass," requiring disclosure of potentially toxic materials before permits are issued, enforcing penalties or accountability for violations, and establishing a City-appointed Environmental Advocate to help stop or prevent toxic harms through review and proposed legal action?

If you tell me the word/character limit your County election office uses (some are strict), I'll compress this into a "fits-any-limit" version without losing the legal meaning.

OFFICIAL BALLOT QUESTION

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2/5/20

Proposed Charter Amendment: Freedom from Toxic Trespass

Question:

"Shall the Reading Home Rule Charter be amended to establish a 'Freedom from Toxic Trespass' right, prohibiting any person, corporation, or government from causing the non-consensual presence of toxins in residents or the environment; requiring full disclosure of toxic materials before City permits are issued; holding all violators legally accountable; and creating an Environmental Justice Advocate to localize permitting and take legal action to prevent or stop such Toxic Trespass, poisoning, and contamination."

☐ YES ☐ NO