

# Panel trims proposal for new commission

Members of the Hillsborough County Charter Task Force agreed that a county commission with nine members would be too large a body.

By TOM INGLIS      MAR 28 1983  
Tribune Staff Writer

The Hillsborough County Charter Task Force agreed Friday to whittle the proposed new county commission from nine members to seven in a unanimous vote.

In a meeting last week, the joint committee of legislators and county commissioners voted to set the number of commissioners under the charter at nine, but there was unanimous agreement Friday that this is too large a body for efficient work.

However, the task force agreed to have five of the commissioners run from and be elected by single-member districts, and two members run from the county at large.

Rep. Carl Carpenter, Rep. James Hargrett, and County Commissioner E.L. Bing urged that all seven commissioners be elected from single-member districts, while Commissioner Jan Platt battled for election of all commissioners on a county-wide basis.

Platt has argued throughout the sessions that the return to single-member districts will mean a return to the corruption of ward politics.

But Carpenter countered by saying the scandals of the 1950s were not of single-member districts, but involved posts filled by countywide elections, and that the current investigation of the county commissioners involves people elected on a county-wide basis.

Platt said she was willing to compromise on the issue, but warned the charter drafters that the change to single-member districts will ultimately weaken the power of the county administrator.

The problems of the county in the next 10 years, Platt said, involve finding sites for such government projects as landfills, wells, resource recovery plants and prisons.

"In a rapidly growing county no one is going to want some of these



Jan Platt

things in his district," she said as she warned that the single-member commissioners will be more provincial in their views than countywide-elected commissioners.

Commissioner Matt Jetton noted that the establishment of the five single-member districts and two at-large districts creates a situation where it is possible three commissioners may be elected from one district.

No decision was made on this problem.

Charter

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single-member districts, while Commissioners Jan Platt, Matt Jetton and Rodney Colson favored at-large districts or at least some combination of at-large and single-member districts.

Paulk said the people of his south county district "would like to elect someone who comes from that area."

If all the commissioners came from single-member districts, he said, the districts would be smaller, the commissioner would have a more direct interest in his constituents, and the elections would be simpler.

Although Bing said he would support whatever districting plan the commission adopted, he agreed with Paulk that the plan to mix the single-member and at-large districts increases the number of people in the commission districts.

"It also makes it much more difficult for a person of meager means to run and win an election," Bing said.

Jetton warned that if all single-member districts were established, voters would not be able to cast ballots for a majority of the commissioners. Under the mix plan, voters in every section of the county will have the ability to vote for a majority of the seven county commissioners — the three at-large commissioners and the single-member commissioner who represents their district.

And Platt asserted that the major future problems of the commission will deal with issues of siting — siting prisons, landfills and resource recovery plants. If the County Commission is dominated by the provincial view of single-member district commissioners, she said, these problems cannot be handled in the best interests of the countywide public.

No lines for the single-member districts will be drawn by the commission until it is determined if the voters will approve or reject the charter.

The charter would also cut the salaries of commissioners from the current \$33,000 to \$25,000, provide a method to have commissioners removed by recall petitions and ouster elections, and provide machinery by which citizens could amend the charter through petitions and special elections.

The three previous charters that were overwhelmingly rejected by voters all contained provisions for consolidation of city and county governments. Although some passed by a modest margin in the city of Tampa, voters of the unincorporated county cast an avalanche of votes.

Supporters of the charter point out that the recent suspensions of three county commissioners after their arrest on extortion charges, added to the guilty plea by one of the accused men and the convictions of the other two, has created a climate favorable to a change in the structure of local government.

In addition, they say, what was once a rural county has become an increasingly urban county over the past 20 years. Property that was once farms and groves has been transformed into a sprawling unincorporated suburbia and the new residents will be more interested in a streamlined government than were the farmers of yesterday.



E.L. Bing



Jan Platt

# 4th home rule charter will go before voters

A principal feature of the charter is the enlargement of the commission from five members to seven.

By TOM INGLIS JUL 20 1933  
Tribune Staff Writer

A home rule charter, the fourth in 16 years, will go before the voters of Hillsborough County on Sept. 20 in a special election.

The charter, which dodges the thorny issue of consolidation of city and county governments, was passed as an ordinance by the County Commission Thursday. Before it becomes effective it must be approved by county voters in a referendum.

The home rule aspect of the charter is a feature that has been sought by local government to end

the practice of local officials going to Tallahassee to have relatively minor changes in local government voted on by legislators.

The charter will continue the current appointive county administrator form of government. It contains language that is intended to strengthen the ability of the administrator to control the day-to-day operation of county government without meddling by the commissioners.

Principal feature of the charter is the enlargement of the commission from the current five members to seven commissioners. Four would be elected from single-member districts, and the other three would be elected at large by a countywide vote.

It was this aspect of the charter that stirred renewed debate in the Thursday meeting. Commissioners E.L. Bing and John Paulk favor all

See CHARTER, Page 6A

6-7-10 Submitta) Gerald White

By TOM INGLIS  
Tribune Staff Writer

4. 21, 84

# Attorneys' predictions differ on fate of charter

An attorney warned Wednesday that the entire home rule charter, passed by the voters last fall, may come apart unless the Department of Justice permits the regular fall elections.

But another attorney addressing the same problem before the County Commission said he doubts the Justice Department's delay of the elections will make the charter ineffective.

The lawyers were speaking of the Justice Department's recent request for massive amounts of information on the charter and the county's new districting system for electing county commissioners.

Washington officials said they would examine the new material during the next 60 days and let the county know if elections can be held. But Robin Krivanek, Hillsborough supervisor of elections, has voiced concern that since the qualification period for commission candidates is between July 16 and 20, the review by Justice will knock out the regular schedule of elections for this year.

The attorneys also discussed the possibility of a new charter and the possible delay of local elections before the County Commission.

And Lawson added that the chief features of the charter form of government that was adopted by voters are:

• The strong division between the legislative branch and the administrative branch that is written into the document.

After hearing Lawson, Commission Chairman Rodney Colson asked him, "You mean the charter and everything is out?"

"Yes sir," Lawson replied.

But Assistant County Attorney Joe Mount said in his view the principal reason for charter adoption was the issue of home rule — having local decisions made in Tampa rather than Tallahassee.

Mount said he doubts that the delay caused by Justice will make the charter ineffective. However, he added, the county may have to apply to the courts for a declaratory decree that would make the election possible.

But Lawson and Mount agreed that all five members of the current commission should sign a letter to be sent to Senators Paula Hawkins and Lawton Chiles, and U.S. Reps. Sam Gibbons and Michael Bilirakis asking that they urge the Justice Department to expedite review of the new charter and election plans.

The attorneys also agreed that Krivanek can do nothing to prepare for the election, not even qualify candidates for the commission race, until the election is cleared through Justice. There are approximately 30 potential candidates who have taken qualifications papers out of the supervisor of elections' office and are preparing to file.

Under the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, Hillsborough County cannot adopt a new election system without preclearance by the Justice Department. The preclearance is necessary because Hillsborough County falls in the classification of a high percentage of Hispanic voters.

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6-7-10  
Submittal by Gerald White

# Representative, NAACP officer voice approval of proposed <sup>Hills</sup> county charter

While one Hillsborough representative was supportive, another said it was improper to take a position on the issue.

By TOM INGLIS  
Tribune Staff Writer

JUL 8 1983

Three different views of the proposed charter for Hillsborough County were aired by two legislators and an NAACP official before the Hillsborough Political Caucus Friday.

The charter was endorsed by Rep. Helen Gordon Davis; endorsed with reservations by Al Davis, first vice president of the Tampa NAACP; while Rep. Mary Figg told the group she felt it would be "improper" for a state legislator to take a position on what is entirely a local issue.

The caucus is a newly formed citizen's group hoping to "restore faith in local government," led by president Pam Iorio.

Al Davis, a member of the Citizens Charter Study

Committee that drafted a charter proposal in 1979, said he felt the charter is a good document and one he could support as a citizen. However, he added, as a member of a minority group he has reservations as to whether the charter will open the political process to minorities. Davis has consistently urged that all county commissioners be elected from single-member districts.

The charter now under consideration is a compromise between single-member districts and at-large districts. The charter would expand the five-member commission to seven members — four from single-member districts and three elected at large.

Rep. Davis told the group she takes issue with the fact that the charter leaves the constitutional officers of the county untouched, and also makes no change in such independent agencies as the Tampa Port Authority and the Hillsborough County Aviation Authority.

Charters in other counties of the state, she said, have brought the constitutional officers — sheriff, clerk of circuit court, supervisor of elections, tax collector and property appraiser — under the charter in such a way as to provide for appointment of these officials.

However, she said she feels the charter is a document she can support.

6-7-10  
Submitted by Gerald White

# Hillsborough <sup>County</sup> charter runs into opposition at hearing

By TOM INGLIS  
Tribune Staff Writer

7/27/83

Strong support for a charter with exclusively single-member districts was voiced by a number of Hillsborough County citizens who appeared at a public hearing on a proposed charter before the County Commission Tuesday night.

Arthur Merish of Apollo Beach told the commission he has opposed every county charter since 1967. Critical of what he termed the "watered down single-member district plan," Merish said, "You shouldn't even have wasted the paper to print it on."

Merish pledged to work against the charter and told the commission, "the voters are going to throw it out."

And a delegation of predominantly black spokesmen, headed by Bob Gilder, president of the Tampa NAACP, expressed concern that the black community will be inadequately represented by the proposed charter government.

In its current form, the charter would expand the commission from a five-man board to a seven-member board. Four of the commissioners would be elected from single-member districts. The remaining three would run countywide and be elected to serve at-large.

Harold Reddish, another black spokesman, said the charter runs against the one-man, one-vote direction being set by court orders. The at-large districts, and the accompanying larger single-member districts will make it more difficult for minority groups to be elected to the commission, he said.

Rick Pyfrom, Fred Moore, and Cliff Paramoure also urged the commission to reconsider its plans for at-large commission districts and make all seven of the proposed commission seats elected from single-member districts.



Jan Platt

ber districts.

The charter appeared in danger of losing its chief proponent, Commission Chairman Jan Platt, at one point during the discussion. When attorney John Lawson told Platt that the initiative section of the charter could possibly give rise to a movement against the county selling bond issues, Platt cooled in her support of the document.

The initiative section permits citizens to change the charter by circulating petitions and holding initiative elections.

"If it would damage the bonding ability of the county, I'd bow out of the charter," Platt said. And when Lawson told her a citizen initiative to bar bond issues was unlikely, Platt said, "I'm not prepared to take that risk. There are enough people in this county who don't want growth, well, they could stop growth tomorrow."

To which commissioner E.L. Bing said, "If that's the will of the people, then the will of the people should prevail."

The commission will continue its consideration of the charter in a workshop session Thursday.

6-7-10

Submittal by Gerald White

# Commission talks on charter, but gets no results

After listening to the sometimes argumentative discussion between commissioners, the League of Women Voters president remarked that the county may never adopt a charter.

By **CARL CROTHERS**  
Tribune Staff Writer MAY 14 1983

The Hillsborough County Commission Friday picked up the ball passed it by local state legislators for reconsideration of a proposed county charter but gained no ground in more than two hours of discussions.

Though it appeared at one point that two and possibly three commissioners were leaning toward replaying history and shelving the controversial document, all agreed to resume talks next week after Commission Chairwoman Jan Platt, the board's senior member, explained the background of Hillsborough County's longtime efforts to reform its government.

"That this is a reaction to the recent past is not the case," she said, referring to the often-criticized three-man voting block of now-suspended Commissioners Fred Ander-

son, Jerry Bowmer and Joe Kotvas.

The three were arrested in February and indicted last month on extortion charges involving a rezoning case. The governor appointed three replacements.

A charter for the county of 700,000 residents would function like a constitution, increasing the government's home-rule power and more clearly separating the administrative branch of government from the legislative function of the commission. Those and other reforms officials say will address the county's history of internal problems.

But the sometimes argumentative discussion Friday between commissioners in a workshop on the charter moved League of Women Voters President Mimi Kehoe to remark with frustration, "It sounds more and more as if it's impossible for us to get one."

The delegation in Tallahassee has drafted a bill to impose a charter on the county but it kicked the measure back to the commission because of opposition to some of its provisions from The Tampa Tribune editorial board and from some commissioners, legislators said.

New Commissioner E.L. Bing noted the division on some charter issues — most notable the ratio of single-member districts to at-large districts on a proposed seven-member commission — both among the legislative delegation and the commission.

He said early in Friday's meeting, "There are some major concerns I'm not even sure we can resolve, at least not amicably."



Jan Platt

"I don't even know whether we even need to bother with it, the charter; there's no rush for it," he said.

Commissioner John Paulk, also newly appointed to the commission, characterized the charter as "a hot potato" and said — also early in the meeting — "I'm ready to set back and sit on it for awhile."

And said Commissioner Rodney Colson, "I just wonder is this really something we want to deal with?"

But Platt encouraged the commissioners not to drop the issue. Acknowledging the effort will take "compromise" she said, "We basically agree on the concepts."

And new Commissioner Matt Jetton was persuasive. "Anything we propose would probably be better than what we have now in a lot of people's minds," he said. "I do not think we should postpone the charter until next year."

The commission will decide next week which of two avenues to pursue in reconsidering the charter: making amendments to the existing legislative bill or proceeding with the rewriting of a new charter for the county to take directly to the voters in September.

A date for next week's workshop was not set.

6-7-10  
Submitted by Gerald White

Tues 6.14.84

# Charter Q and A

**Question.** Why has the Justice Department asked for additional information about Hillsborough County's redistricting plan and its recently adopted charter?

**Answer.** Because Hillsborough County is covered by the Voting Rights Act of 1965, any change in local laws affecting voting registration and elections must be approved by the Justice Department to prevent adoption of changes with a "discriminatory intent or effect," said County Supervisor of Elections Robin Krivanek.

The Justice Department has asked for additional information because of allegations that the county's redistricting plan, which includes a combination of four single-member districts and three at-large districts, discriminates against minorities. Minority leaders have said at-large district systems dilute the power of the minority vote, thereby denying minorities a fair chance at getting elected.

The county charter, approved by voter referendum last year, is the subject of much of the request because it sets up the new single-member district plan.

**Q.** How will the Justice Department's request affect local candidate qualifying times and the scheduled fall local elections in Hillsborough County?

**A.** County officials say it may

take several weeks to compile the information requested by the Justice Department, which is allowed 60 days to review the materials once it receives them. Supervisor of Elections Krivanek said if a decision is not reached before the candidates' qualifying period — July 16-20 during which candidates must file official registration papers — the process could be pushed back possibly as far as Aug. 1 and still allow the candidates to run in the first primary election, Sept. 4. The Secretary of State can designate a special qualifying period, she said.

But, if Justice's decision is not received before Aug. 1, when absentee ballots are normally mailed, local candidates likely would not be on the Sept. 4 ballot.

It is possible the Oct. 2 second primary ballot could become, in effect, the first primary and the scheduled Nov. 6 general election, the second primary for local candidates. In the event this occurred, a new general election would have to be organized at a later date, Krivanek said.

But if the delay in the Justice Department's decision goes beyond the scheduled primary and general elections, three new elections would have to be scheduled.

**Q.** How much will it cost?

**A.** Each election cost between \$80,000 and \$90,000.

**Q.** What happens to the county commissioners now in office if the fall elections are postponed?

**A.** Because of staggered terms, only three of the five Commission seats are up for election this year. If the Justice Department's inquiry delays the general election, all commissioners likely would simply remain in office until the situation is resolved and a new election held, Krivanek said. This would occur, she said, because elected officials technically must serve until a successor arrives.

**Q.** Has an election ever been stayed before in Florida.

**A.** Yes. In 1977 in Escambia County, the county's at-large district process was challenged by a group of blacks and ruled by unfair to minorities by a federal court. County officials appealed the court decision forcing them to create single-member districts. The following year, when the local election was scheduled, a federal appeals court stayed the election while the districting decision was under appeal, freezing the elected officials in office. The plaintiffs won their case in district court, and in the court of appeals, but the U.S. Supreme Court returned the case to the court of appeals in March. Arguments are still pending in the court of appeals.

6-7-10

Submitted by Gerald White

# Probe puts doubt in commission election

By GARY SHEPHERD

Although the extensive Justice Department probe into Hillsborough's new plan for electing county commissioners has local officials worried, Elections Supervisor Robin Krivanek said the review affects candidates more than anyone else.

"The impact on me is less than on candidates," she said. More than 30 people intend to qualify for one of five commission seats that, possibly, will be voted upon in the fall.

Under the new Hillsborough County Charter plan, four commissioners would represent districts within the county, while one commissioner would be elected as a countywide "at-large" representative.

Commissioners Jan Platt and Rodney Colson will be "grandfathered" into two other at-large seats under the plan.

Seven candidates currently plan to run for the District 4 seat, which will represent most of the eastern half of the county, including Plant City, Brandon and the East Bay area.

If, that is, the commission elections take place as scheduled. Other fall elections and votes are not hit by the Justice Department probe, Ms. Krivanek emphasized.

"People have quit jobs to run for office, taken leaves of absence. They've put large chunks of time into it. Some have a lot of money at stake," said Ms. Krivanek of the uncertainty surrounding the election.

"I don't know if I can receive qualifying papers," she said of the July 16-20 candidate qualifying period.

Hillsborough County voters last September approved by a 3-to-1 margin the new charter, which calls for three at-large commissioners and four district commissioners.

The charter also included boundaries for the four new districts.

Because this county is one of several Florida counties that falls under a 1975 amendment to the federal Voting Rights Act regarding language minorities, any change in county voting procedure must be reviewed by the Justice Department.

"We haven't had a big problem until this point," said Ms. Krivanek of notifying the Justice Department of all

voting changes, such as polling address changes and other relatively minor changes.

No problem was expected with the charter changes, either.

The Justice Department, which needs 60 days to respond, was sent information about the charter in January. In mid-March, the feds requested more information.

"The Justice Department felt there were two separate submissions needed," said Ms. Krivanek, one on the charter and a second on the specific boundaries of the new districts.

Hillsborough County lawyers sent the additional information. County attorney Sara Fotopulos met with Justice Department officials to "discuss specifics," said Ms. Krivanek.

In April, the Justice Department had all the information they had requested, according to Ms. Krivanek.

But someone, or perhaps more than one person, complained to the Justice Department about the new charter. A Justice Department spokesperson refused to say who had complained or how many complaints were received.

It was locally reported that a member of the Hillsborough NAACP sent a letter to the Justice Department stating the charter and the districting plan were discriminatory in nature.

(When a reporter called the Tampa NAACP office, a recording said that the number had been disconnected. Operators had no new telephone number for the local NAACP.)

According to Ms. Krivanek, the Justice Department received a letter "nobody's seen but the Justice Department."

But she said she understood "the point of the letter was to say several other districting plans had been submitted" for consideration under the charter.

"The letter questioned whether or not there might have been discriminatory purposes" behind voting changes adopted in the final version of the charter, according to Ms. Krivanek's understanding.

The Justice Department, in a June 5 letter to county attorney Sara Fotopulos, requested more information — much more information, including:

- Records of 1979 charter study committee meetings;
- Minutes of numerous 1979, 1982 and 1983 Board of County Commissioner meetings concerning the charter;

•A detailed explanation of why the 4-3 commission plan had been adopted instead of the 5-2 plan recommended by the charter study committee or the 7-2 plan recommended by the Hillsborough Legislative Delegation;

- Records of public hearings on the charter;
- Information on the selection of the three commissioners appointed by Governor Bob Graham.

"So, now we're waiting to hear from the Justice Department," said Ms. Krivanek.

She asked the Justice Department specifically about the problems faced in qualifying candidates by the July 20 deadline.

She said she'd received an "unofficial" response to go ahead with qualifying.

The elections office "has to go ahead" with plans, said Ms. Krivanek.

Meanwhile, in Washington the Justice Department would give no indication of when the probe would be completed.

"It's still in review," said Justice Department spokeswoman Amy Brown.

"We'll try to get it through as quick as we can," she said, noting that Hillsborough County had urged the feds to expedite the matter.

Spokeswoman Brown said the Hillsborough County file is 10 inches thick. She also said that the Justice Department receives hundreds of voting rights complaints per year.

She said she "can neither confirm nor deny" any information about who complained in Hillsborough County or the nature of their complaint(s).

She said that an equal opportunity specialist will do the fact finding, an attorney will review the case and "ultimately, more attorneys will work on the case."

She had no idea of the cost of the probe to the Justice Department.

"It's impossible to calculate," she said.

6-7-80 Submittal by Gen Id White

# HILLSBOROUGH CHARTER: U.S. Steps In



Tribune photo by FRED FOX

## Davis filed injunction

Al Davis filed an injunction suit in U.S. District Court to block County Commission elections, scheduled for earlier this week.

He is seen entering the federal courthouse in downtown Tampa earlier this week.

# Ruling against commission election may wreck charter

The new Hillsborough County home rule charter was adopted by voters last September, following scandals that swept the county courthouse.

By TOM INGLIS  
Tribune Staff Writer

What does the restraining order against the Hillsborough County Commission election mean to the county charter? In all probability, it leaves it in wreckage.

It could also spell future problems for the city of Tampa.

Hillsborough County has been attempting to become a chartered, home rule county for more than 20 years. But repeatedly, voters have turned down charters that would consolidate city and county governments.

However last September, following the scandals that swept the county courthouse, citizens finally wanted a change in the structure of government and voted in a charter that made no effort to consolidate the governments.

In the wake of the arrests of Commissioners Jerry Bowmer, Joe Kotvas and Fred Anderson and the trials that followed, the new home rule charter was adopted.

Tampa attorney John Lawson served the commission as special counsel on drafting the charter. He is also a member of a past charter commission that drafted one of the charters that was rejected, and has helped draft charters in other Florida counties.

The federal government specifically objects to the provision in the charter that replaces the current five at-large commissioners with a new system under which four commissioners are elected from single-member districts, and three from at-large districts.

This 4-3 plan is a thread that runs through the fabric of the charter, Lawson said, and if this thread is pulled out most of the rest of the charter will unravel. Almost the whole charter would have to be rewritten, he said.

The County Commission can adopt a

new charter anytime they wish," Lawson said. "And they can send it to the voters for approval. But in view of the current situation, the wrecked election, the opposition of black citizens, and the concern about another government getting into a mess, I'm not sure another charter would pass."

Could the county return to the system now in use? This is the system of five at-large commissioners set forth as the basic form of government for counties under the Florida Constitution.

There might be difficulties, Lawson said. The at-large system of electing commissioners, and city council members, is a target in the same case that brought the new commission plan under attack in federal court this week.

How then should the county proceed in the interests of orderly government?

Lawson suggested that the county should first go to a state court, circuit court in Hillsborough County, and ask the judge if the 4-3 commission plan which was passed by the voters may be cut out of the charter and the remainder be patched up.

If the court says the county can't cut out the 4-3 plan, it would mean that the county would continue with a five at-large commission until some alternative plan could be approved by the federal government," Lawson said.

Lawson's proposal to go to the courts for a decree that would determine the status of local government is one of the steps that was approved by the County Commission last week at the urging of William Pearce Smith Jr. Smith has served as special counsel to the commission during this week's hearings in federal court.

The city of Tampa has a City Council plan quite similar to the county's 4-3 plan. The city's plan calls for four council members to be elected from single-member districts, and three from an at-large district.

Although this would appear to make the

city subject to the same problems the county now faces, there are differences. For example, with the concentrated black population of the city of Tampa, it was possible to set up a City Council district populated by 60 percent blacks. The highest concentration of blacks the county commissioners could pack into a single-member district was 37.6 percent, far less than a majority.

The unincorporated county is only 5 percent black. If the cities are added, this raises the black population to 13.4 percent. In Tampa, blacks comprise 23.5 percent of the population.

In a recent hearing, Commissioner Jan Platt noted that blacks have not complained about the city's 4-3 plan, but they have attacked the county's 4-3 plan.

At that point, Al Davis, a NAACP member, told Platt that action against the city is being considered. Davis is a plaintiff in the lawsuit suit against the city and the county and won the restraining order against the county in that suit.

Tampa Mayor Bob Martinez said he doesn't expect any problems in having the Justice Department approve the new city election system.

The city's charter has been approved by a majority of black voters, and a black has already been elected to City Council in an at-large election, which means a black should be able to be elected in a single-member district race, Martinez said.

Judge Elizabeth Kovachevich exempted the city from the restraining order because the Justice Department has not raised objections against the city to date. In a letter to Krivanek, the Justice Department said the city election plans are not "ripe" for review because the districts must be realigned before the next city election in 1967.

It's doubtful if the order against Hillsborough County's elections will have much effect on other Florida counties. John Thomas, executive director of the State Association of County Commissions, said the other six chartered counties in the state have been "around long enough so they aren't likely to encounter problems."



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## Sheriff Appears Before Charter Review Board

BY LEON B. CREWS  
Sentinel Staff Writer

**Gerald White**, led a question and answer session on May 24th when Hillsborough County **Sheriff David Gee** appeared before the Charter Review Board of Hillsborough County.

Board member **White** asked **Sheriff Gee** questions related to the structure of the Home Rule Charter for Hillsborough County as well as the initiative to elect a county mayor.

"I have three concerns I addressed with **Sheriff Gee**, one of them was the county mayor initiative. I wanted to know if he supported the idea."

**Sheriff Gee** said he felt that was an issue for the citizens of Hillsborough County, not him.

"I think those things are

ing off."

As far as the charter is concerned, **Sheriff Gee** said he thinks it has served us well.

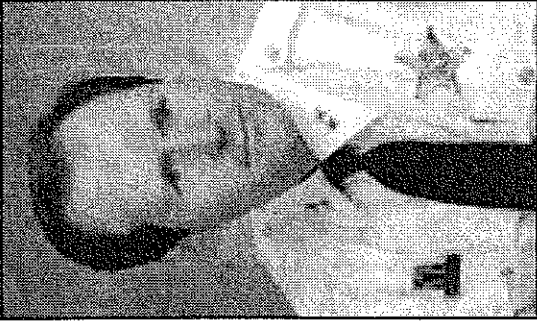
"I think it was well thought out and as much as we complain and as much that's made about things we have from time to time,

when I look at Hillsborough County, I make my judgment based on when I talk to other sheriffs about the problems they are having. I think we're in much better shape than they are."

**White** also was concerned about the County Emergency Policy Group.

**Sheriff Gee** said he doesn't want to make a power grab, but in principle. He's always felt the Sheriff would be in charge of that.

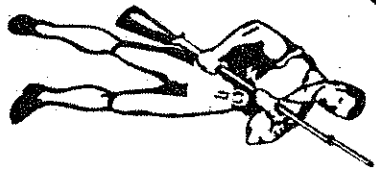
"That department is under my command. I think the Sheriff is more suited to deal with those types of concerns."



SHERIFF

6-7-10

Submitted by Gerald White



# Florida Sentinel Bulletin

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75¢

## County Mayor Issue Addressed

**A** cross between Barnaby Jones and Johnnie Cochran, local attorney Warren Hope Dawson addressed members of the Hillsborough County Charter Review Board last Monday on the subject of a county mayor.

The County's four single-member district and three at-large commissioner system "is under attack," he said.

In fact, Dawson declared, the present situation "borders on a coupe d'etat, from a small group of people who have decided to take their chance to get rid of the County's commissioner system, if they can." Yet, Dawson cautioned, "Now may not be the time to "tamper with a system, which cannot defend itself," ending his comments with a parable, "I would hate to be in a county with only one judge."

Board members listened intently to Attorney Dawson as he painted a picture that was clear and stark. At the center of the portrait was the figure of a county strong-man (or strong-woman) calling all the shots that once were decided by seven.

6-7-10 Submitted by Gerald Johnson