

Charter Review Commission Historical Timeline

- 2013 Presentment of the Special Purpose Grand Jury Civil Case #12CV1000:
Includes recommendation to “initiate a process to revise the Organizational Act...”
- February 2015 DeKalb County Operations Task Force recommends the establishment of “a Charter Review Commission tasked with reviewing the organizational act, paying particular attention to the issues that the Task Force has raised but for which no recommendations were developed.” They also recommend that the Charter Review Commission should be provided sufficient funds from DeKalb County to retain its own staff and be given a minimum of 18 months to complete its work. Furthermore, the Task Force recommended that a Charter Review Commission be formed every five years thereafter.
- April 2016 Interim CEO May signs an executive order creating a charter review commission to study the county’s form of government after the state legislature failed to pass a measure establishing the charter review commission. The Commission had a budget of \$150,000 and was to have 12 months to complete its work. Each Commissioner had one appointment and one member from each of the following: DeKalb House delegation, DeKalb Board of Education, DeKalb Chamber of Commerce, Georgia Municipal Association, Association of County Commissioners of Georgia, and two additional members – who were to serve as Co-Chairs – appointed by the CEO. As this began at the end of his service as Interim CEO, the commission never gained traction and had only one or two meetings.
- March 2018 DeKalb County CEO Thurmond announces that he will issue an executive order to create a Charter Review Commission. The move is supported by Jeff Rader, the presiding officer of the Board of Commissioners; Sen. Emmanuel Jones, chair of the DeKalb Senate delegation; and Rep. Howard Mosby, chair of the DeKalb House delegation. All four men signed off on a memo codifying Thurmond’s decision. The Commission is to start June 1 and will be authorized for two years.
- April 2019 CEO Thurmond signs an Executive Order to create a DeKalb Charter Review Commission. The document was also signed by Commissioner Jeff Rader, the Presiding Officer of the Board of Commissioners; State Rep. Karla Drenner, chair of the DeKalb House delegation, and Sen. Emanuel Jones, chair of the DeKalb Senate delegation.
- Per the County’s news release:
- During the 2018 session of the Georgia General Assembly, leadership in the DeKalb House and Senate delegations worked with CEO Thurmond and the Board of Commissioners to develop the purpose and framework of the commission.
- The commission is to be comprised of 17-members charged with examining the DeKalb County form of government by conducting a comprehensive review of the DeKalb

County Organization Act with the goal of identifying ways to improve the form of government to its highest quality and most efficient form.

- 3 members appointed by the CEO with 2 members serving as co-chairs
- 1 member appointed by the DeKalb County Board of Education
- 7 members, each appointed by a member of the Board of Commissioners
- 3 members appointed by the DeKalb House delegation
- 3 members appointed by the DeKalb Senate delegation
- Ex-officio members will include the two delegation chairs

The commission is to convene from May 1, 2019 to December 31, 2020 (20 months), with a final report and recommendations issued by December 31, 2020.

And the CEO states:

“The purpose of this commission is to study DeKalb’s current form of government to ensure the county is responsive to the ever-changing needs and demands of county government. It has been 40 years since the Organizational Act was initially passed in a public referendum. Jimmy Carter was president; annual interest rates were more than 18 percent; and Sony launched the Walkman. Now is the time to take stock of changes that are needed to create a 21st-century government that is transparent, efficient, and fiscally sound.”

- May 2019 DeKalb House delegation members conduct interviews for Commission candidates and selects members and alternates. How other Commission positions are filled is unknown.
- Dec. 31, 2019 Emailed letter from CEO sent to commission members notifying them of a January 29, 2020 informational meeting.
- Jan. 29, 2020 Informational Meeting called by CEO with announcement of Judge Gregory Adams as Chair.
- March, 2020 First formal commission meeting scheduled; however, Judge Adams emails members suspending future meetings due to the pandemic and the need for public access to meetings.
- Mar. 24, 2020 Judge Adams resigns; no notification provided to Charter Review Commission members.
- Sept. 16, 2020 Letter sent to CEO Thurmond from Charter Review Commission members James Grubiak, Mary Hinkel, Claudette Leak and Susan Neugent and alternate member John Turner requesting: 1) an extension of the Executive Order from Dec. 31, 2020 to Dec. 31, 2022 and 2) that he work with DeKalb TV to provide a technical solution for virtual meetings. The letter is copied to all Commission members and all appointing authorities.
- Oct. 1, 2020 Emailed letter from the CEO sent only to James Grubiak, Mary Hinkel, Claudette Leak, Susan Neugent, and John Turner stating that he will issue an extension of his Executive Order prior to its expiration of Dec. 31, 2020.
- Dec. 19, 2020 Letter sent to CEO Thurmond from Charter Review Commission members James Grubiak, Mary Hinkel, Claudette Leak and Susan Neugent and alternate member John

Turner requesting again: 1) executive order to extend commission's term through 2021 and 2) appointment of new chairperson.

- [Dec. 15, 2020 Revised Executive Order issued; Commission is to convene from January 1, 2021 to December 31, 2021 (12 months). **Note: Executive Order received after the Dec. 19, 2020 letter sent to CEO from commission members.**]
- January 2021 Charter Review Commission has yet to hold an official meeting, in the absence of an appointed chair.
- Feb. 7, 2021 Small group letter sent to CEO offering to help him identify a Chair
- Feb 22, 2021 Informal zoom meeting with CEO, some commissioners and some delegation members in response to small group letter. CEO suggests possible spring 2021 appointment of new chair.
- Mar. 18, 2021 CEO issues a revised Executive Order and adds new language to include a review of the Org Act specifically in light of the impact of the pandemic and its impact on County operations in order to: 1) identify potential enhancements and improvements in service delivery or operational structure; and (2) to ensure DeKalb County will be responsive and effective when operating during any future emergency conditions. Time given now is January 2021 to December 31, 2022.

March 2021 – February 2022 Charter Review Commission has yet to hold an official meeting, in the absence of an appointed chair.

- Feb. 2022 CEO appoints Judge Ronald B. Ramsey, Sr. to serve as Chair of the DeKalb Charter Review Commission. Meeting is announced for March 21, 2021 at 7 pm by Zoom.
- Ramsey later steps down due to potential conflict with Code of Judicial Conduct and opinions of the Judicial Qualifications Commission that suggests Judges should not accept appointment to a government committee, commission or other position that is concerned with issues of fact or policy or matters other than the improvement of the law, the legal system or the administration of justice; acceptance might reasonably cast doubt upon their impartiality or demeanor in the judge's office.

- April -May 2022 Former State Senator Steve Henson appointed Chair. He calls and talks with each commission member

- June 2022 First meeting – begin review of Organizational Act

- July-Dec 2022 Monthly meetings to either review Organizational Act or hold Public Hearings
September (D2) Public Hearing
November (D4) Public Hearing

- Jan 2023-Dec23 Monthly meetings and Public Hearings in D3, D5 and D1

- January 24 Final Report from Carl Vinson Institute