

San Francisco Public Library

SAN FRANCISCO CHARTER COMMISSION RECORDS

1931-1980 (Bulk 1979-1980)

Collection number: SFH 25



San Francisco History Center
San Francisco Public Library

2009

INTRODUCTION

Provenance

Transferred from the San Francisco Charter Commission as it disbanded in 1980.

Access

This collection is open for research. A minimum of 2 working days' notice is required for use.

Publication Rights

All requests for permission to publish or quote from manuscripts must be submitted in writing to the City Archivist. Permission for publication is given on behalf of the San Francisco Public Library as the owner of the physical items.

Collection Number

SFH 25

Size

2 cubic feet (in 2 boxes)

Processed by

Tami J. Suzuki

Date Completed

August 2008

Languages Represented

Collection materials are in English.

Preferred Citation

[*Identification of item*], San Francisco Charter Commission Records (SFH 25), San Francisco History Center, San Francisco Public Library.

Related Collections and Materials

Researchers are encouraged to see also the Jack Morrison Papers, 1962-1988 (Bulk 1966-1969, SFH 24), the San Francisco Citizens Charter Revision Committee Records, 1968-1972 (SFH 33), the San Francisco Select Committee on Charter Reform Records, 1978-1996 (Bulk 1994-1994, SFH 32), and the San Francisco History Center's subject and card files, and to check the library catalog for related materials.

ORGANIZATIONAL HISTORY

The charter is San Francisco's constitution. The San Francisco Charter Commission was established as a result of voter approval of Proposition L in June 1978¹ and Proposition X in November 1978.² These measures each called for the election of 15 commissioners who were elected in November 1978. The commissioners were charged with proposing a new charter or revising the existing charter that was adopted in 1932 and later amended over 500 times.

The first city charter was adopted in 1898, creating a "strong mayor" form of government. Reformers in the 1920s succeeded in voter adoption of a new charter in 1932, establishing a chief administrative officer to direct most of the city's departments. Under this charter, power was diffused throughout the city. Over time numerous incremental charter changes made governing arrangements more complex.

Charter revision was attempted several times resulting in little change including three failed attempts. A fourth committee made recommendations that appeared on the November 1968 ballot (Proposition E) but was defeated. A reconstituted committee then rearranged charter sections more logically with no substantive changes. This recodification passed in November 1971 (Proposition R).

The main principles of the 1979-1980 commission's proposed document were to simplify the charter and make it an enabling document, to give authority to the responsible official, make different branches of government plan priorities cooperatively, and fix responsibility and structures between branches of government, in addition to holding elected officials responsible. Over a nearly 2-year period, the group conducted over 70 public hearings, 2 surveys, and a public education program, and prepared 2 drafts and a final version.

Among other things, the proposed new charter, Proposition A, gave more authority to the mayor, reduced the chief administrative officer's term from 10 to 4 years, reduced the controller's term from life to 6 years, required that women be included on each commission and board, and gave greater status to the Human Rights Commission.

Proposition A failed, 46 percent to 54 percent, on Nov. 4, 1980.

¹ "Declaration of Policy: Shall the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco act to call an election to choose charter commissioners, who would thereafter prepare and propose a revised City and County Charter for subsequent approval by the voters of San Francisco?"

² "Shall a Charter Commission be elected to propose a new charter or to revise the charter?"

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection documents the work of the San Francisco Charter Commission which met from 1978 to 1980 and put forth a new city charter on the November 4, 1980 ballot. The measure, Proposition A, failed.

Materials include charter history, drafts and final text, reports, surveys, minutes and hearing summaries, public comments, a facilitator's manual, a speakers manual, legal opinions, campaign materials, press releases, and newspaper clippings.

ARRANGEMENT NOTE

The collection is organized into 5 series: 1) Meetings; 2) Reports and Charter Text; 3) Public Education and Participation Program; 4) Yes on A Campaign; and 5) Reference Materials. Within each series, materials are chronologically organized.

SERIES NOTES

Series 1: MEETINGS, 1978-1980
.75 cubic feet

This series includes minutes, hearing summaries, and commission training materials.

Series 2: REPORTS AND CHARTER TEXT, 1979-1980
.6 cubic feet

Includes surveys, reports, and draft and final proposed charter text.

Series 3: PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION PROGRAM, 1979-1980
.33 cubic feet

This series includes a speaker's manual and press releases used for public education.

Series 4: YES ON A CAMPAIGN, 1980
7 folders

Includes press releases and ballot arguments.

Series 5: REFERENCE MATERIALS, 1931-1980
.33 cubic feet

Includes reports and text of other San Francisco charter revision efforts.

CONTAINER LISTING

SERIES 1. MEETINGS, 1978-1980

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Box 1	1	Commission Workshop Materials	Feb. 1979
	2-4	Minutes, Agendas, and Hearing Summaries	1978-1980
	5	Executive Director Job Opening	[1979]
	6-7	Administration and Finance Committee	1979
	8-9	Organization of Government Committee	1979-1980
	10-11	Personnel Administration Committee	1979-1980

SERIES 2. REPORTS AND CHARTER TEXT, 1979-1980

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Box 1	12	Working Papers	1979-1980
	13	First Interim Report	Oct. 1979
	14	Management Symposium Summary	Jan. 1980
	15	Baseline Survey and Findings	Jan-March, 1980
	16	Baseline Survey Facilitator's Handbook	February 1980
	17	Follow-up Survey and Findings	May-Aug., 1980
	18	Survey Business	Dec. 1979-June 1980
	Box 2	1	First Discussion Draft
2		Working Papers for Second Draft	May-June 1980
3		Second Discussion Draft	June 1980
4		Third Draft	July 1980
5		Comments from City Agencies and the Public	April-July 1980
6		Comparison of Proposals with 1932 Charter	July 1980
7		Legal Opinions	Nov. 1979-Aug. 1980
8		Proposed Charter	Aug. 1980
9		Summary of Proposed Charter	Aug. 1980
10		Revised Text	Nov. 1980

SERIES 3. PUBLIC EDUCATION AND PARTICIPATION PROGRAM, 1979-1980

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Box 2	11	Advisory Committee	1979-1980
	12	Report	March 1980
	13	Speaker's Manual	1980
	14	Literature	1980
	15	Press Releases	1979-1980
	16	Radio and Television Public Service Announcements	March-Aug., 1980
	17	News Clippings	1979-1980
	18	Photographs	[n.d.-1980]

SERIES 4. YES ON A CAMPAIGN, 1980

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Box 2	19	Commissioners' Signatures	Aug. 1980
	20	Steering Committee Meetings	Aug.-Oct., 1980
	21	Television and Radio Spots	Aug.-Oct., 1980
	22	Press Releases	Sept.-Oct., 1980
	23	Slate Cards	Oct-Nov, 1980
	24	Ballot Arguments	Nov., 1980
	25	<i>Charter Revision in San Francisco</i>	1980

SERIES 5. REFERENCE MATERIALS, 1931-1980

<u>Container</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Folder Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
Box 2	26	Charter	1931
	27	Charter Legislation History	1965
	28	Charter Legislation History Proposed Charter Revision	1969
	29	Proposition E Text	1969
	30	Committee Reports	1969-1972
	31	Charter	1978
	32	News Clippings, Related	1978-1980
	33	Charter Amendment: Senior Executive Service Project Report	Sept. 1979