14. Four-Year Terms for Mayor and City Council

Action:	**Approve the Restructuring Government Committee recommendation to form a Citizen's Advisory Committee to consider and review four-year terms for the Mayor and City Council. The Citizen's Advisory Committee will provide a report to City Council at the June 13, 2011 business meeting.**

Committee Chair: Warren Cooksey

Staff Resources: Mac McCarley, City Attorney's Office
Bob Hagemann, City Attorney's Office

Explanation

- The Citizen's Advisory Committee would be a seven to eleven member committee
- Former Mayors Harvey Gantt and Richard Vinroot have agreed to serve as Co-Chairs.
- The Chair/President of the following organizations or their designees would be invited to serve on the Committee:

  - Asian Coalition
  - Black Political Caucus
  - Charlotte Chamber
  - Democratic Party
  - International Cabinet
  - Latino Coalition
  - League of Women Voters
  - Native American Council
  - Republican Party

- A minimum of five organizations must agree by April 11 to participate before the Citizen's Advisory Committee can begin its work.
- The Committee would be asked to report its recommendations to the Mayor and Council at the June 13, 2011 business meeting.

Committee Discussion

- At the February 14, 2011 City Council meeting, a referral was approved for the Restructuring Government Committee to review and consider four-year terms for the Mayor and members of City Council.
- City staff provided City Council with reports and minutes from previous Council review of the issue, as well as, Mayor and City Council election data from 1975-2009.
- It was noted that this issue was considered by the Restructuring Government Committee in February 2010 and at that time the Committee chose to take no action on the referral.
- Senior Deputy City Attorney Hagemann informed the Committee that State law gives the authority for Council to make changes to terms of office. Procedurally, there is a notice and public hearing requirement. Council can either propose the issue be placed on the ballot for voter approval or the Mayor and Council can enact the changes without a referendum. If done by Council without a referendum, the law provides a petition process whereby citizens can force a referendum.
- The Committee discussed the need to have community involvement in the discussion of four-year terms for the Mayor and Council.

- Council member James Mitchell proposed forming a Citizen's Advisory Committee consisting of nine citizens representing the two major political parties and various community organizations. The Committee added the International Cabinet as a community group and an invitation to Luther Moore to serve on the committee. The total number on the Citizen's Advisory Group was increased to 11.
- At the March 24, 2011 Restructuring Government Committee meeting the Committee amended its original recommendation to City Council regarding four-year terms for the Mayor and City Council to include:
  - the Citizen's Advisory Committee will provide a report to City Council at the June 13, 2011 business meeting
  - former Mayors Harvey Gantt and Richard Vinroot have agreed to serve as Co-Chairs of the Citizen's Advisory Committee
  - the Chair/President of each organization or their designee will be invited to serve on the advisory committee
  - a minimum of five organizations must agree to participate before the Citizen's Advisory Committee can begin its work.
- The motion on the amendments passed 3-1 (Cannon, Kinsey, Mitchell for, Cooksey against).