



General Government & Planning (GGP) Committee

April 28, 2026

Summary and Motions

Committee members Liz Sheehan (Chair), Shayla Lynch, J.D. (Vice Chair), Dan Wu, James Brown, Chuck Ellinger II, Emma Curtis, Dave Sevigny, Jennifer Reynolds, and Hil Boone were present. Committee member Whitney Elliott Baxter was absent. Council members Tyler Morton, Tom Eblen, and Amy Beasley were present as non-voting members. Chair Sheehan called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

I. APPROVAL OF MARCH 10, 2026 COMMITTEE SUMMARY (Sheehan)

A motion by Wu to approve the March 10, 2026 Committee Summary was seconded by Sevigny and approved unanimously.

II. CHARTER REVIEW (CIVIC ASSEMBLY) (Wu/CivicLex)

CivicLex presented on the outcomes of Lexington's first civic assembly, a three-year effort culminating in a March 2026 deliberative process involving a randomly selected, demographically representative group of residents. The assembly, funded entirely through philanthropic grants, produced three primary recommendations related to council compensation, council accountability, and ongoing charter review.

CivicLex emphasized that the assembly model is designed to engage a representative cross-section of residents in informed, structured deliberation on complex policy issues. The selection process included over 10,000 outreach mailings and resulted in a final participant group closely aligned with Lexington's demographic composition across multiple measures.

Assembly members presented three recommendations, each adopted by supermajority vote. The first recommends increasing Council compensation to the equivalent of Lexington's average annual income (\$59,987), adjusted annually for inflation, with implementation beginning in 2031. Assembly members cited the expanded demands of the role, lack of competition for seats, and barriers to broader participation in public office as key factors supporting the change.

The second recommendation focuses on council accountability, proposing a charter amendment that requires the Council to establish publicly accessible standards for attendance and performance by ordinance. The intent is to improve transparency and provide voters with clearer information about councilmember engagement.

The third recommendation calls for a mandatory charter review every eight years, conducted by a randomly selected and demographically representative body, with a defined 12-month process timeline. CivicLex noted this approach is intended to ensure the charter remains current and reflective of community needs over time.

A dissenting assembly member presented concerns regarding the scale of the proposed compensation increase, potential unintended incentives for long-term incumbency, and the structure of accountability

measures. There was also interest in expanding the scope of the future charter review to include issues such as term lengths.

CivicLex clarified that all three recommendations would require charter amendments to advance and that draft language is still under development in coordination with the Department of Law. Key implementation questions include the appropriate level of detail for charter language versus ordinance, as well as how best to reflect the intent of the compensation benchmark over time.

Committee discussion reflected broad appreciation for the assembly process, particularly its representative nature and ability to engage residents not typically involved in local government. Members raised questions about implementation timelines, ballot structure, and whether certain elements—particularly accountability measures—could be addressed through Council action without a charter amendment. There was also discussion of the challenges associated with placing multiple items on an already lengthy ballot.

Motion by Wu to accept the recommendations of the Civic Assembly regarding council compensation, council accountability, and charter review, as set forth in today's presentation, and to refer the proposed amendments regarding the same to the full Council. Seconded by Reynolds and approved unanimously.

This will come to the full Council for discussion at the June 2, 2026 Work Session, where draft ordinance and ballot language are expected to be presented.

III. LANDLORD AND TENANT ADVISORY GROUPS (Lynch/Lanter)

An update from the Department of Housing Advocacy & Community Development on the landlord and tenant advisory groups was provided by Commissioner Charlie Lanter. He described ongoing efforts to gather stakeholder input through informal advisory structures, noting persistent challenges in tenant participation due to time constraints, personal sensitivities, and structural barriers. In response, the department has shifted toward more flexible engagement strategies, including community-based forums and partnerships with service organizations.

Councilmembers discussed the importance of maintaining accessible, purpose-driven engagement opportunities and acknowledged the inherent imbalance in participation capacity between landlords and tenants. While there was interest in strengthening feedback mechanisms, the Commissioner advised against formalizing the advisory groups at this time, citing the need for flexibility and the difficulty of sustaining consistent participation under a formal structure.

IV. ITEMS REFERRED TO COMMITTEE (Sheehan)

Motion by Reynolds to remove two items from the committee: *Recommendation 8 of the Planning & Development Study* and *Recommendation 10 of the Planning & Development Study*. Seconded by Ellinger and approved unanimously.

Motion by Brown to remove *Efficiencies In Our Development Processes and Compliance with HB 443* from the committee. Seconded by Curtis and approved unanimously.

Chair Sheehan adjourned the meeting at 2:23 p.m.