

**THREE PROPOSITIONS AND ABSTRACTS
FOR THE CITY OF ITHACA BALLOT
(General Election - November 8, 2011)**

Proposition Number 1:

Shall a local law be approved, that would amend the Ithaca City Charter, in order to (1) establish two-year terms for the members of Common Council elected in the general election following every 10-year federal census (for example, in 2011 or 2021, etc), and (2) provide that in the following general election (for example, in 2013 or 2023, etc), two members of Common Council shall be elected from each ward - one for two years, and one for four years?

Abstract:

The title of the local law is “A Local Law to Amend Section C-10 of the Ithaca City Charter, as to the Election of Common Council Members Following Each Federal Census.”

This local law must be approved at referendum because it changes the term of an elective office.

Following each federal census (conducted in the years ending in “0”), it is typically necessary for the boundaries of some or all City wards to be adjusted, to ensure balanced populations counts. With staggered, 4-year terms for the two representatives from each ward, the possibility arises that the alderpersons from a ward would represent differently-defined areas, at least for two years. This can be avoided by having both terms end at the same time - before any reapportionment takes effect. This would be accomplished by approval of this Local Law, which would make the terms of the Council members elected in the year after each census (for example, in 2011) 2-year terms; then, in the following election, when the re-apportioned wards are in effect (for example, in 2013), by having one alderperson in each ward elected for a 2-year term, and the other one (in each ward) elected for a 4-year term.

In the following election (for example, 2015), the regular pattern of electing one alderperson in each ward, for a 4-year term, would resume (until 2021, when the post-census cycle would start over).

The City has used this system since the 1980s, by passing a local law every 10 years. Approval of this Local Law would eliminate the need to do so in the future.

Proposition Number 2:

Shall a local law be approved, that would amend the Ithaca City Charter and Code, in order to (1) clarify and simplify the descriptions of the positions of various, appointed City officers (primarily, the heads of City departments), (2) remove Charter language that grants authority to or places constraints upon certain department heads that are inconsistent with State law and/or best practices, and (3) provide for the appointment of deputy and assistant department heads by their respective department heads, rather than by the Mayor?

Abstract:

The title of the local law is “A Local Law to amend Sections C-5, C-17, C-20, C-21, C-59, C-60 and C-98 of the Ithaca City Charter, and Sections 4-20 and 4-22 of the City Code, to Clarify the Descriptions of City Officer Positions, and to Provide for Appointment of Deputy and Assistant Department Heads by the Affected Department Heads.”

This local law must be approved at referendum because it transfers the authority to appoint deputy and assistant department heads from the Mayor to the affected department head, and removes an inconsistent provision that provides for the Mayor to appoint all employees of the Police Department.

The purpose and effect of this local law are:

- (1) to update and streamline the descriptions of various, appointed City officer positions (primarily department heads) so that they conform to contemporary regulations and practice, and are generally consistent - with each other and with other parts of the Charter;
- (2) to remove Charter provisions that grant authority to or place constraints on certain department heads (Fire Chief, Police Chief, Superintendent of Public Works) that are inconsistent with contemporary practice, efficient governance, State Civil Service law, and/or certain other, newer Charter provisions; and
- (3) to provide for the appointment of the deputy or assistant department heads for each department by the head of that department, rather than by the Mayor (as is now the case).

Proposition Number 3:

Shall a local law be approved, that would amend the Ithaca City Charter, in order to (1) provide a single, consistent description of the general authority and duties of the City's various department heads – including their power to appoint and discipline all departmental employees, and (2) create a streamlined description of the general role of the City's deputy and assistant department heads?

Abstract:

The title of the local law is “A Local Law to amend Section C-22 of the Ithaca City Charter so as to Describe the General Authority and Duties of City Department Heads, and to Clarify the General Role of the City's Deputy and Assistant Department Heads.”

This local law must be approved at referendum because it clarifies that the authority to appoint and discipline employees in all City departments (other than the department head) lies with the head of that department – whereas Section C-22 currently provides for the Mayor to appoint deputy and assistant department heads.

The purpose and effect of this local law are:

- (1) to consolidate into a single provision of the Charter a description of the general authority and duties of the City's 13 department heads;
- (2) to clarify that department heads have sole authority to appoint and discipline employees in their departments – subject only to the legislative powers of Common Council and the supervision of the Mayor; and
- (3) to create an updated and streamlined description of the general role of the deputy or assistant department heads in the City's various departments.