Minneapolis
City of Lakes

June 2, 2009

Minneapolis Charter Commission
350 South 5th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55415

Dear Charter Commission Members:

Thank you for the time you have invested in considering the charter changes proposed by Council Members Ostrow, Remington and Samuels. We know you have devoted many hours to public hearings and reading letters and emails from elected officials and members of the public. Your commitment to the City of Minneapolis is greatly appreciated.

The four of us have all expressed our opinions to you with regard to at least two of the charter proposals – the proposals related to the Park Board and the City Administrator. Council Members Goodman and Benson signed a letter and testified in favor of putting the measures on the ballot. Council President Johnson and Park Board President Nordyke spoke in opposition to both proposals. While the four of us remain convinced of our positions, we have a proposal that we encourage both the Charter Commission and our colleagues to consider.

We believe that taking a year to study whether the stated benefits of the proposals could be achieved without adopting the changes to the charter would be beneficial. We propose that a commission of elected officials from the Park Board, the City Council, the Minneapolis business community and residents meet together to try to forge solutions that could include streamlining our operations and bringing greater efficiencies to both the Park Board and City enterprises. We have contacted the Citizens League which is considering if it could lead this effort and we ask the Commission to allow us the opportunity to work together in good faith for a year to try to reach common ground. We ask our colleagues to fully engage in this process to amicably work together in this attempt to better our City.

We hope that after a year of work we can come to agreement on how we can work together going forward. If, however, we are unsuccessful, we understand that both sides may return to their current positions.

Thank you for considering our proposal.

Very truly yours,

Barb Johnson
President, Minneapolis City Council

Tom Nordyke
President, Minneapolis Park Board

Lisa Goodman
City Council Member

Scott Benson
City Council Member

cc: Mayor R.T. Rybak; City Council Members; Members of the Park Board