

Charter

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# SC Council-Manager Pros, Cons Given

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Rarely does a cocktail party for historians go by without the emphatic affirmation, "consider the past to know the future."

The special committee currently studying the Santa Cruz City Charter took a look at the past Wednesday, thanks to one of the men responsible for the current manager-council form of government under which the city now operates.

Jack Chiorini, former mayor and one of the members of an old board of freeholders which helped draw up the present city charter in 1948, told of the evils of the old commissioner form of government which Santa Cruz once had.

Paul Niebanck, chairman of the City Charter Revision Committee, said before the committee embarks on a study of new changes to the city's charter, he wants to consider the events that led up to the formation of SC's current form of government.

Chiorini said under commissioners, each department head was chosen by the voters, which meant that influential persons could persuade the department head, or commissioner, to do him favors in return for his support during the following election.

One year, Chiorini said, a mayor was elected and then moved to San Francisco — never showing up for work in Santa Cruz. A citizens' group tried to have the phantom mayor kicked

out of office, but there was no legal way to do it.

Chiorini said that the commissioner government form encouraged nepotism as well.

The city manager form of government, he said, was chosen because it is efficient and cheap.

Committee member William Dornhoff asked Chiorini whether his group had considered forming districts from which councilmembers would be elected, and Chiorini replied that such a concept had been rejected "because we didn't want to create wards...and dynasties."

Robert Alford, a professor at UCSC, also addressed the committee. He told them that studies have revealed that voter turnouts are usually lower under a city manager form of government than other forms of government. Also, voter turnouts remain on the low side, he said, when elections are scheduled at different times from statewide and national elections, when candidates are non-partisan and when councilmembers are chosen from cities at large, rather than districts.

The committee also adopted a timetable for its work, calling for a presentation to the city council over its recommendations by early March.

Under the schedule, the committee at its next meeting, Dec. 1, will invite the seven members of the city council to speak on what they believe are the most important issues of prospective charter changes.