

Chapter 14: Franchises, Revocable Consents and Concessions

Section 362. Definitions.

For the purposes of this charter:

- a. "Concession" shall mean a grant made by an agency for the private use of city-owned property for which the city receives compensation other than in the form of a fee to cover administrative costs, except that concessions shall not include franchises, revocable consents and leases.
- b. "Franchise" shall mean a grant by an agency of a right to occupy or use the inalienable property of the city to provide a public service.
- c. "Responsible Agency" shall mean (1) with respect to a franchise, the agency designated by the mayor pursuant to section three hundred sixty-three or three hundred seventy-eight as the agency having primary expertise and responsibility for the type of franchise involved, (2) with respect to a revocable consent, the agency authorized to grant a revocable consent of the type involved pursuant to section three hundred sixty-four, or (3) with respect to a concession, the agency granting a concession.
- d. "Revocable Consent" shall mean a grant by the city of a right, revocable at will, (1) to any person to construct and use for private use pipes, conduits and tunnels under, railroad tracks upon, and connecting bridges over inalienable property, (2) to an owner of real property or, with the consent of the owner, to a tenant of real property to use adjacent inalienable property for such purposes as may be permitted by rules of the department of transportation or the department of information technology and telecommunications or (3) to a public service corporation for facilities ancillary to, but not within, a franchise granted prior to the effective date of this section.

Section 363. Franchises.

a. Franchises shall be awarded only in accordance with the provisions of an authorizing resolution adopted by the council pursuant to the provisions of this section.

b. An initial determination of the need for franchises of a particular type shall be made by the head of the agency designated by the mayor as having the primary expertise and responsibility in the policy area covered by that type of franchise. Upon making such a determination, such agency, with the advice of the corporation counsel and such other agencies as the mayor shall determine, shall prepare a proposed authorizing resolution for that type of franchise and shall submit such proposed authorizing resolution to the mayor. Such a proposed authorizing resolution shall set forth the nature of the franchise or franchises to be granted, the public service to be provided, the terms and conditions of the franchise or franchises, including any subsidies that will be given to a franchisee, the method by which proposals will be solicited for the franchise or franchises and the criteria to be used in evaluating the proposals submitted in response to such a solicitation.

c. The mayor may submit such a proposed authorizing resolution to the council. Promptly upon submission to the council, the text of any such authorizing resolution shall be published in the City Record. Within ninety days of receiving such a proposed resolution, the council or a committee of the council shall hold a public hearing on such resolution. The council may approve, approve with modifications or disapprove such resolution by majority vote. Any action of the council approving a modification to a proposed authorizing resolution or disapproving a proposed authorizing resolution shall be subject to the disapproval of the mayor in the same manner as a local law which is passed by the council, and any such disapproval shall be subject to reconsideration, repassing and adoption, notwithstanding the objections of the mayor, in the same manner as a local law which is disapproved by the mayor. The council may on its own initiative amend an authorizing resolution. The procedure for council review and approval of such a proposed amendment shall be the same as for an authorizing resolution.

d. No authorizing resolution or other action of the council may provide for any involvement by the council or any member of the council in the selection of a franchise pursuant to such resolution.

e. Pursuant to an authorizing resolution adopted by the council, the responsible agency may issue one or more requests for proposals or other solicitations of proposals, provided that (1) the corporation counsel shall have determined that the request for proposals is consistent with the provisions of the authorizing resolution and (2) no such request or solicitation shall be issued unless either the department of city planning has determined that the proposed franchise would not have land use impacts or implications or such request or solicitation has been reviewed and approved pursuant to section one hundred ninety-seven-c and section one hundred ninety-seven-d. A community board may waive a public hearing and the preparation of a written recommendation with respect to any such request for proposals or solicitation which in its judgment does not involve a substantial land use interest. Any such request for proposals or solicitation issued in accordance with this subdivision shall set forth the criteria and procedures to be utilized in evaluating the proposals submitted in response to such request or solicitation.

f. The selection of a franchisee shall be in accordance with the provisions of the authorizing resolution covering franchises of the type involved. Each such selection and each franchise agreement shall be subject to the review and approval of the franchise and concession review committee pursuant to sections three hundred seventy-one, three hundred seventy-two and three hundred seventy-three.

g. Nothing in this section shall preclude any agency, prior to proposing an authorizing resolution, from issuing one or more requests for information or other solicitations of information regarding the availability of potential franchisees with expertise in the subject matter of a proposed type of franchise, suggestions regarding the appropriate terms and conditions which should be contained in an authorizing resolution for that type of franchise or any other information which would assist the agency in determining how to proceed with regard to the public service involved.

h. All franchises shall be consistent with the following requirements:

(1) Every grant of a franchise or modification thereof must be by written agreement approved by the franchise and concession review committee and executed by the responsible agency under the authority of an authorizing resolution adopted by the council in accordance with the provisions of this chapter.

(2) No such agreement shall be for a longer period than twenty-five years except that in the case of a tunnel railroad it may be for a period not exceeding fifty years.

(3) The agreement may, at the option of the city, provide for giving to the grantee the right of renewals not exceeding in the aggregate twenty-five years on a fair redetermination of the compensation to the city to be made upon standards and methods as therein specified.

(4) At the termination of such agreement all the rights or property of the grantee in the inalienable property of the city to which the franchise relates shall cease without compensation.

(5) Any such agreement may provide that upon its termination the property, plant and equipment of the grantee shall, to the extent therein specified, thereupon be and become the property of the city, either without compensation to the grantee or on payment to the grantee of the fair value thereof as property, to be determined as provided in the contract, but excluding any value derived from the franchise. The city shall have the option either to take and operate on its own account the property, plant and equipment when so acquired, or to lease the same for a term not exceeding twenty years or to require that the property of the city be restored to its condition prior to the granting of the franchise.

(6) Every agreement granting a franchise for the performance of any public service shall contain an agreement by the grantee to recognize the right of its employees to bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing, and at all times to recognize and deal with the representatives duly designated or selected by the majority of its employees for the purpose of collective bargaining in respect to rates of pay, wages, hours of employment or

other conditions of employment and not to dominate, interfere with or participate in the management or control of or give financial support to any union or association of its employees. This subdivision shall not apply to a contract providing for a modification or amendment of or extension of service under a franchise not containing a similar provision, provided that the term of such franchise is not extended thereby.

Section 364. Revocable consents.

- a. A revocable consent shall not be granted for a use that would interfere with the use of inalienable property of the city for public purposes, nor shall a revocable consent be granted for a purpose for which a franchise may be granted.
- b. All revocable consents shall be revocable at any time by the responsible agency, shall be granted for a fixed term, and shall provide for adequate compensation to be annually provided to the city during the continuance of the consent.
- c. Revocable consents, other than for telecommunications purposes, may be granted by the department of transportation with respect to property under its jurisdiction or by such other agency as may be authorized by law to grant revocable consents. Revocable consents for telecommunications purposes may be granted by the department of information technology and telecommunications. All revocable consents shall require the approval of the department of transportation.
- d. Every petition for the grant of a revocable consent shall be filed with the department of transportation. Each petition shall state the location of the proposed revocable consent and shall be in such form and contain such other information as the department of transportation and other responsible agencies, if any, shall require by rule. Petitions for each type of revocable consent shall be distributed to and reviewed by the agencies required to do so by local law or executive order of the mayor. If, in the judgment of the department of city planning, a proposed revocable consent has land use impacts or implications, the petition for the proposed revocable consent shall be subject to review and approval pursuant to section one hundred ninety-seven-c and section one hundred ninety-seven-d.
- e. Notwithstanding any provision of this charter or the administrative code, revocable consents to construct and operate sidewalk cafes shall be reviewed pursuant to subchapter six of chapter two of title twenty of the administrative code.

Section 365. Terms of agreements; enforcement.

- a. Every agreement memorializing the terms and conditions of a franchise, revocable consent or concession shall contain adequate provisions by way of forfeiture or otherwise (1) to secure efficiency of public service at reasonable rates, if a public service is to be provided, (2) to assure the maintenance of the property of the city in good condition throughout the term of the agreement, and (3) to provide for adequate compensation to the city.
- b. Every agreement memorializing the terms and conditions of a franchise, revocable consent or concession shall contain an agreement by the grantee that it will (1) permit the placement or display of the public health messages required by section 17-707 of the code, on any property subject to such franchise, revocable consent or concession, or any facility, plant, equipment or other property used in connection with such franchise, revocable consent or concession; and (2) bear any costs associated with the posting of such public health messages and any costs in terms of foregone advertising revenues associated with the placement or display of such public health messages.
- c. The responsible agency shall also monitor the performance of the grantee and enforce the terms and conditions of any franchise, revocable consent or concession under its jurisdiction.

Section 371. Public hearing on proposed agreement; publication of notice.

The franchise and concession review committee in the case of a franchise, or the responsible agency in the case of a revocable consent, shall hold a public hearing on the proposed agreement memorializing the terms and conditions of each proposed franchise or revocable consent before final approval of the proposed franchise or consent. Any such public hearing conducted by the franchise and concession review committee shall be held within thirty days of the filing with the committee by the responsible agency of a proposed agreement containing the terms and conditions of the proposed franchise. No hearing held by the franchise and concession review committee or by the responsible agency shall be held until after notice thereof and a summary of the terms and conditions of the proposed agreement shall have been published for at least fifteen days, except Sundays and legal holidays, immediately prior thereto in the City Record, nor until a notice of such hearing, indicating the place where copies of the proposed agreement may be obtained by all those interested therein, shall have been published at least twice at the expense of the proposed grantee in a daily newspaper designated by the mayor which is published in the city of New York and having a circulation in the borough or boroughs in which the affected property of the city is located and a weekly newspaper or newspapers designated by the mayor which are published in the city of New York and have a circulation in the community district or districts in which the affected property of the city is located. In the event a franchise or revocable consent relates to property of the city located in more than one borough, notice of hearing in a weekly newspaper shall not be required; however, in that event, notice of hearing in two daily newspapers, and mailing by the grantee, no later than fifteen days immediately prior to the date of the public hearing, of such notice to the borough presidents and community boards and council members in whose districts the affected property of the city is located, shall be required. In the case of a franchise for a bus route which crosses one or more borough boundaries, notice of hearing in a weekly newspaper shall not be required; however, in that event, notice of hearing in two daily newspapers, and mailing by the grantee, no later than fifteen days immediately prior to the date of the public hearing, of such notice to the borough presidents and community boards and council members in whose districts the bus route is located, and posting of such notice in the buses operating upon such route, shall be required.

Section 372. Powers of the mayor.

- a. The separate and additional approval of the mayor shall be necessary to the validity of every franchise agreement and revocable consent agreement.
- b. Every such agreement shall before it takes effect be presented, duly certified, to the mayor for approval. Such agreement shall not be effective unless approved by the mayor within sixty days after it is presented to the mayor.

Section 373. Franchise and concession review committee.

- a. A franchise and concession review committee is hereby established. The committee shall consist of the following officials or their designees: the mayor, who shall serve as chair; the director of the office of management and budget; the corporation counsel; the comptroller; and one additional appointee of the mayor. Whenever the committee reviews a proposed franchise or concession or the procedures for granting a particular concession, the borough president of the borough in which such franchise or concession is located or his or her designee shall also serve as a member of the committee. If such a franchise, concession or procedure relates to more than one borough, the borough presidents of such boroughs shall designate one of such borough presidents or another individual to serve as a member of the committee for the purpose of considering such matter.
- b. The mayor shall designate a public officer or employee to act as the clerk of the committee who shall be responsible for maintaining the records and minutes of the committee and performing such other duties as may be required.
- c. The committee shall act by the affirmative vote of at least four members except that the affirmative vote of at least five members shall be required to approve a franchise agreement.
- d. The committee shall:
 - (1) adopt rules establishing procedures for granting concessions through public bidding or by other means designed to ensure a competitive and fair process;

(2) review and approve the granting of concessions that are proposed to be granted pursuant to procedures that differ from the procedures established by the rules of the committee; provided, however, that the committee need not review awards of concessions that are not subject to renewal and have a term of less than thirty days;

(3) determine whether each franchise agreement proposed by a city agency is consistent with the request for proposal or other solicitation pursuant to which such agreement was negotiated and require appropriate modifications to any such agreements to correct any significant inconsistencies; and

(4) review and approve the selection of franchisees pursuant to subdivision f of section three hundred sixty-three.

Section 374. Concessions.

a. No city agency shall grant a concession without either complying with the procedures established by the franchise and concession review committee or obtaining the approval of the committee prior to granting the concession.

b. The city planning commission shall adopt rules that either list major concessions or establish a procedure for determining whether a concession is a major concession. A "major concession" shall mean a concession that has significant land use impacts and implications, as determined by the commission, or for which the preparation of an environmental impact statement is required by law. All major concessions shall be subject to review and approval pursuant to section one hundred ninety-seven-c and section one hundred ninety-seven-d.

Section 375. Registration with the comptroller.

All agreements memorializing the terms of franchises, revocable consents or concessions shall be agreements subject to the applicable registration requirements and other provisions of section three hundred twenty-eight except that the terms "vendor" and "contractor" as used in section three hundred twenty-eight shall be deemed to apply to the holders of franchises, revocable consents and concessions.

Section 376. Central file.

Copies of all franchise and revocable consent agreements shall be filed with the department of transportation. The department of transportation shall compile and keep up to date a listing of all current franchises and revocable consents which shall be available to the public and shall include the date, terms, names of the parties, description of the permitted use and location of each franchise and revocable consent. Such listing shall be arranged and indexed so as to enable a member of the public to determine what current franchises and revocable consents involving use or occupancy of streets and sidewalks have been granted for any location in the city and the identity of the holder of each such franchise or revocable consent.

Section 377. Bureau of franchises.

The bureau of franchises shall be discontinued as of the first day of July, nineteen hundred ninety. The records and staff of the bureau of franchises shall be transferred to the department of transportation, except that the records and staff of the bureau relating to telecommunications franchises shall be transferred to the department of telecommunications and the records relating to energy shall be transferred to such agency as the mayor shall designate.

Section 378. Transition.

a. All franchises, revocable consents and concessions granted prior to the effective date of this section shall remain in full force and effect for the terms which they were granted.

b. Not later than the first day of March, nineteen hundred ninety, the mayor shall designate a single agency as the responsible agency for each type of franchise currently granted by the city. If such an agency intends to continue granting any such type of franchise, the agency shall submit to the council a proposed authorizing resolution for such type of franchise at least two years, or such shorter period as may be approved by the franchise and concession review committee, prior to the earliest expiration date of any existing franchise of that type; provided, however, that the department of transportation, with the approval of the franchise and concession review committee, may extend the expiration date of the operating authority of any private bus company that does not receive a subsidy from the city to a date not later than the thirtieth day of June, two thousand and eleven. Notwithstanding the provisions of section three hundred seventy-one, the public notice and hearing requirements of the franchise and concession review committee with respect to an approval of an extension of the operating authority of a private bus company shall be fully satisfied by a public hearing held after notice of such hearing shall have been published at least one day prior thereto in the City Record.