



King County

Charter Review Commission

October 24, 2018

Attendance:

Ron Sims (Co-Chair), Tim Ceis, Elizabeth Ford, David Heller, Sean Kelly, Linda Larson, Clayton Lewis, Marcos Martinez, Jeff Natter (via telephone), Toby Nixon, Nikkita Oliver, Rob Saka, Beth Sigall (via telephone), Alejandra Tres (via telephone), Kinnon Williams and Sung Yang (via telephone).

Excused:

Joe Fain, Ian Goodhew, Michael Herschensohn, Will Ibershof, Louise Miller, Nat Morales and Brooks Salazar.

Council and Executive Staff:

Kelli Carroll, Director of Special Projects, Patrick Hamacher, Interim Director of Legislative Analysis, Callie Knight, Executive Program Assistant, and Mac Nicholson, Director of Government Relations.

Call to Order

Co-Chair Ron Sims called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m. and asked those at the table to introduce themselves.

Approval of Minutes

Motion: Commissioner Kelly moved approval of the minutes of the September 26, 2018 meeting. Two typographical corrections were made. The minutes were approved as amended.

Outreach Committee Report-Out

Kinnon Williams presented the revised outreach plan as amended based on input from the Commission and staff. He noted that in order to stay on the projected timeline, it would require approval today. The outreach letter will be sent out both electronically, with active links, and by U.S. mail.

One typographical correction was made to the draft letter. Discussion ensued regarding use of the term “freeholders”. It was determined that the word “Commissioners” would be used in place of “freeholders”.

Motion: Commissioner Saka moved approval of the Outreach Plan. There being no objections, the Outreach Plan was adopted.

It was noted that the assistance of everyone in the room would be needed for any necessary outreach follow up.

Charter Presentation

Mike Sinsky, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, provided a historical overview of the King County Charter and its contents. It was also noted that the original and current charter both contain a preamble and nine articles. The presentation covered the differences between charter and non-charter counties; the purpose of the Charter - to provide the framework for County government that is augmented by code, provisions and other administrative acts of County officials; and an explanation of each of the articles.

Discussion/Comments/Questions:

- Look at the option of placing authorities into the Charter that would allow the County Council or Executive to intervene in extraordinary circumstance that involve separately elected officials. Initiate some process to investigate and hold those officials accountable. Allow them to place the individual on administrative leave. Consider the possibility of having it be a superior court role.
- Look at how many offices are separately elected under the current Charter, and how many really need to be.
- Look at other offices and consider which ones should potentially be elevated to an elected office.
- The potential for an elected public defender in a co-equal manner to the prosecutor.
- Can the Office of Law Enforcement Oversight (OLEO) investigate potential Sheriff misconduct?
- Who should be the bargaining agent in collective bargaining negotiations?
- What role does OLEO play in Sheriff's Office negotiations?
- How do other counties handle the collective bargaining issue?
- Tensions between unincorporated and incorporated areas.
- How regional committees came about and whether there is still a need for all of them.
- Suggested use of a weighted or preferential voting system to elect council members, thereby eliminating districts. Would eliminate the problem of where you draw the district lines and might work to empower minorities.
- Possibility of having more councilmembers and thus smaller districts, perhaps go to a part-time role to cut costs.
- Difference between section 840 - anti-discrimination and section 843 - freedom of religion clauses and what they mean. Potential contracting conflicts with the State of Washington and the federal government in regard to these.
- Potential expansion of the scope of protected classes under the Charter.
- What will be the official mechanism for submitting proposals – from Commissioners, the public, etc.

Follow-up:

- Discuss at a future meeting how the separately electeds became elected officials rather than appointees.
- Have staff come back with different models for public defenders (e.g., separately elected, what position they have, authority, etc.).
- Look at how the Chief Administrative Officer role came about and clean it up so it is more in line with current practice.

- Answer whether the use of a weighted or preferential voting system would be legal?
- Additional narrative and context on the County Executive's concepts will be provided in advance of the next meeting.
- Amendment concepts submitted by separately electeds will be provided prior to the next meeting.
- Commissioners can submit amendment ideas to staff prior to meetings, so that they can be included in the meeting packet.

Handouts

- ✓ A updated listing of Charter amendments since its inception was provided.
- ✓ A PowerPoint presentation entitled "King County Charter: 101" was also included in the materials.
- ✓ Letters from four of the County Councilmembers expressing their Charter amendment concepts were provided.
- ✓ A list of the County Executive's Charter amendment concepts was distributed.

Co-chair Simms encouraged members to think about what they think this government should look like over the next decade.

The next meeting will be November 28, 2018.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.