



King County

Ron Sims
King County Executive

King County Charter Review Commission
Public Hearing Summary – April 14, 2008
Preston Community Center, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm

The 2007-2008 Charter Review Commission held the third of four public hearings on Monday, April 14th, 2008 at the Preston Community Center. The purpose of the meetings was to gather input from the public about the amendments the Charter Review Commission is proposing.

Commissioner Doreen Cato chaired the meeting. Other commissioners in attendance were Sarah Rindlaub, Tara Jo Heinecke, John Jensen, Gov. Mike Lowry and Allan Munro. In addition, Ava Frisinger, Mayor of Issaquah, spoke on behalf of the Suburban Cities Association.

Ms. Cato gave opening remarks and introduced the commissioners. Commissioners discussed each of the recommendations. Commission staff member Corrie Watterson Bryant gave a presentation on the charter process to date. Bob Burns of King County DNRP provided further explanation about the selection of properties for the OSA.

Ms. Cato opened the floor to citizen comments. Jeff McMorris, Chief of Staff for Councilmember Kathy Lambert (District 3) read a statement on behalf of Councilmember Lambert. Six people made remarks; a total of 15 citizens attended the meeting.

Comments on recommendations and actions:

1. Open Space Amendment (1 comment)
Ed Schein's – supports the OSA. Mr. Schein's formal statement is attached to this summary.
2. Sheriff's Office (1 comment)
Jeff McMorris commented on behalf of Councilmember Kathy Lambert – recommended that the Commission more closely follow the recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Panel and give authority for bargaining working conditions to the Sheriff.
3. Unincorporated and Rural Area Representation (2 comments)

Jeff McMorris commented on behalf of Councilmember Kathy Lambert – recommended that the senior official be a cabinet level position and an appointment that would require Council confirmation.

Gloria Benson – supports the spirit of the CRC’s amendments but recommends that the UA senior official live in rural and/or unincorporated areas and that he or she is not just a figurehead. In addition, if the senior official is in the Executive Office, this is a concern since the Executive has been the least sympathetic to rural issues.

4. King County Library System (1 comment)

Additional comments:

- Endorsement of the recommendations package (1 comment)
Ava Frisinger (Issaquah Mayor, and President of the Board of Directors, Suburban Cities Association) – the SCA’s formal statement (as presented by Jay Covington on April 15th) is attached to this summary and expresses support for most of the CRC’s recommendations, including those amendments pertaining to regional committees.
- Gender identity and expression (1 comment)
- Instant Runoff Voting (2 comments)
Claude Ginsburg – support (do not postpone recommending IRV)

Please support King County's Open Space Charter Amendment

Open space within King County's watersheds are crucial to maintain the evergreen forest cover that make our homeland so special. Open space provides watershed and soil protection, maintains continuous wildlife corridors as well as recreation and pedestrian corridors through our neighborhoods.

We moved here to the Northwest because of the green landscape, not because of developed areas that are brown deserts – parking lots, freeways and streets, building roofs, bulldozed land and soil destruction.

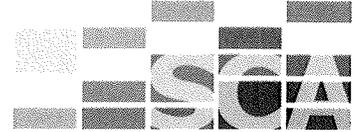
We need to make open space as important a land value as water, streams and Puget Sound are. And we must encourage private landowners to protect their land as open space.

Shortly after Washington's Open Space Act was passed, our family used an inheritance to purchase 36 acres of saltwater cliff front in Skagit County and qualify it for open space so it was valued as its existing use, forested recreational property, NOT its highest and best use, waterfront homesites. Forty years later it was purchased for an addition to a county park preserve. It took this long for the value as open space to be needed by the county, but in the meantime our family was able to hold onto it.

Our current home on Bear Creek also has about 3 acres that are under Open Space Easement that provide forest canopy and creek buffer protection for the Bear Creek watershed. We are also members of Water Tenders, a group dedicated to retaining at least 50% forested cover for the entire Bear Creek watershed, to preserve one of the most important salmon spawning streams in the Northwest.

Needless to say this open space amendment to protect 106,000 acres of forest land and natural areas in King County is just as important as 12,000 acres of farmlands preservation properties, land already protected under the Charter with special status. Please cause this charter amendment to happen. Preservation of the green spaces we all treasure must be protected and future open space acquisitions made easier because of this charter amendment.

Green is good. Thanks. Ed Schein 20427 NE 162nd St. Woodinville, WA.
98077-9456 4/14/08



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Good evening.

My name is Ava Frisinger. I am the President of the Board of Directors of the Suburban Cities Association and the Mayor of the City of Issaquah.

I appreciate this opportunity to testify on the proposed amendments to the King County Charter on behalf of the Suburban Cities Association.

The Suburban Cities Association provides information, education and advocacy on behalf of its 35 member cities. Collectively member cities represent approximately 785,000 King County residents or 53% of the population of incorporated King County.

SCA has been pleased to be invited to participate throughout the review process of the King County Charter. Newcastle Councilmember Sonny Putter and SCA Executive Director Karen Goroski have attended and participated in most meetings of the Commission as well as its Regional Governance Committee and work groups. They have been complimentary of the inclusive process of the Commission's work.

Early in 2007 SCA formed a work group to draft the SCA recommendations for amendments to the King County Charter. Those recommendations were vetted at our Public Issues Committee where an average of 25 cities coalesce on a monthly basis. The SCA Board of Directors acted on the work of the Public Issues Committee and on September 20th forwarded our recommendations to the Charter Review Commission. The issues of the suburban cities were grouped into four subject areas:

1. Annexation and Transition
2. Regional Committees
3. County Wide Special Purpose Districts
4. Good Government

Recognizing that the Commission had a limited amount of time to address a myriad of issues, we are pleased that so many of the issues of the suburban cities were included in the areas of "Good Government" and the "Regional Committees".

Although the Commission's proposed amendments to the Charter regarding the Regional Committees do not necessarily correspond to the original recommendations from SCA, we feel much progress was made and appreciate the efforts of all parties involved. Therefore, SCA wholeheartedly supports the recommended amendments in **Sections 230.10, 270.20, and 270.30** for the Regional Committees.

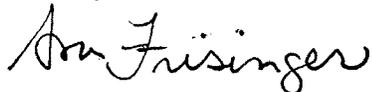
Under the heading of “Good Government”, SCA had recommended ***“that there be urban unincorporated transitional committees in the urban unincorporated areas. We felt that the Charter did not intend for there to be any kind of government structure in urban unincorporated areas.”*** SCA feels that the compromise reached with the Office of the King County Executive and the County Council which has resulted in a proposed Charter amendment in section 320.20 may address our concerns.

SCA had also recommended that ***“the charter review process should be amended so that the recommendations of the commission must be submitted to the voters as drafted by the commission. This new provision will strengthen the role of the Charter Review Commission. It will guarantee that the work of the commission will be reviewed by the voters.”*** The proposed amendment to the Charter in **section 800** that would require the County Council to review and take action on all Charter Review Commission recommendations is a step in the right direction.

Finally, SCA recommended that ***“citizens should be permitted to amend the charter through the citizen initiative process by means of a super majority vote. This option creates a more responsive government which allows the public to submit charter amendments to the voters through the initiative process.”*** The Commission’s proposed amendment in **section 800.20** clarifying the citizen initiative process is generally responsive to the intent of SCA’s recommendation. While the proposed amendment does not require a supermajority vote, it at least sets the threshold for required number of signatures at 20%. This would help ensure that only initiatives with broad-based support are successful

SCA appreciates the many, many hours that the volunteers committed to the Charter Review process. We believe the results were well worth the effort and will encourage the County Council to review and act on your recommendations as written.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ava Frisinger".