



King County

Charter Review Commission

February 26, 2019

Federal Way Community Center
Community Outreach Meeting

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Louise Miller (Co-Chair), Ron Sims (Co-Chair), Joe Fain, Elizabeth Ford, David Heller, Michael Herschensohn, Toby Nixon, Rob Saka, Brooks Salazar and Sung Yang

Excused:

Tim Ceis, Ian Goodhew, Sean Kelly, Linda Larson, Clayton Lewis, Marcos Martinez, Nat Morales, Jeff Natter, Nikkita Oliver, Beth Sigall, Alejandra Tres and Kinnon Williams

Council and Executive Staff:

Kelli Carroll, Director of Special Projects, Patrick Hamacher, Director of Legislative Analysis, and Mac Nicholson, Director of Government Relations

Also in Attendance:

Meeting facilitator Betsy Daniels, Co-President, Triangle Associates Inc., and Mishu Pham-Whipple, Project Associate, Triangle Associates, Inc.

Welcome and Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m., and the Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

Overview of Agenda/Meeting Protocols

Ms. Daniels explained the process for the evening.

Charter Review Overview

Patrick Hamacher provided a presentation regarding the history of the Charter and the Commission, an overview of prior changes to the Charter, an outline of the

Charter process, and a summary of the primary topics that the current Commission is addressing.

Small Group Instruction

Attendees were asked to break into three groups, consisting of both the public and Commission members, to address the topics listed on the handout provided along with any other relevant topics of interest.

Small Group Report Out

Group 1:

- Workers' Bill of Rights – built into the framework of the Charter. Most of the work has been done. A lot of the framework has been passed, just a matter of protecting it. Could be a model for cities that don't have the framework.
- Project labor agreements being the preferred method of contracting with King County should be written into the charter. This will ensure timely completion of projects without labor unrest. Adding a community workforce agreement would allow access to employment for people living within those communities, and that money would cycle back into the same community.
- Elected positions – feel that we have done quite well with the currently elected positions.
- Size of County Council – no definitive outcome to discussions.
- Ranked-choice voting – Would be interesting to hear what the King County Elections department thinks about this.
- Civilian oversight of law enforcement – OLEO is doing a good job. Not a great deal of input on this.
- Surplus land for housing – Do long-term leasing; agree to keep affordable, then sell for profit when aged out on those built by the Housing Consortium; things that are kept in King County housing, we can control them so they are not lost.
- Changing King County Demographics – Economically disadvantaged being pushed south; services have remained north but the populations are moving south – how to get them to match up with each other.

Group 2:

- Senior issues – Don't seem to be well represented in King County. Would like to see a senior council or commission; public utility discounts; limit taxes on seniors – particularly property taxes; and update qualifications for senior benefits.
- Section 840 related to anti-discrimination – one individual felt that it doesn't include protection for political affiliation, veteran status or caretaker status – that should be remedied.
- Veteran council or commission – one individual expressed a desire for such an entity to deal with King County veteran issues.

Group 3:

- Distribution of services and resources throughout King County – south King County seems to be the dumping ground; disparity between north and south King County with the allocation of resources and with affordable housing Federal Way gets a huge amounts of 100%, 30% AMI housing projects with large families and

it floods the school district and the funding is not provided for the schools or police; a little bit of school impact fee but overall is taxing the community.

- Public financing of campaigns – Seattle program has helped individuals feel like they can be part of a campaign and support a campaign, but we do not like the idea of being taxed.
- Having an elected Sheriff and Director of Elections – has direct effect on citizens and government participation and direct influence. Director of Elections may have an appearance of malfeasance or ill intent when they make decisions during an election year for themselves. For the Sheriff, how running once every four years when overseeing an entire agency that is responsible for constitutional policing, that might not be enough accountability for the top law enforcement officer in the county. Equity training would be good for the police force across King County. Some areas that are more diversified may get it on the job, but other areas may need more training. Some wanted Sheriff's term to be shorter so they have to be accountable to the voters more often.
- Priority hiring – talked about its importance.
- Civilian law enforcement oversight – discussed need for proper tools to get and share documents through subpoena power or other means.
- Representation of deceased family in inquests – it is important.
- Affordable housing - Accountability within the affordable housing programs - County should have more accountability to start investigating the companies who build and make sure they are doing things the way they should be. Equity and balance across the County.
- Size of Council – More members would provide better opportunity for more representation.
- Ranked choice voting – some support for this.
- Prosecutorial discretion – re-offenders, do something with behavioral health and substance abuse disorders, how are victims involved and what are their rights. It's a big priority.
- Inquest representation of deceased victims – helps more for police accountability.
- Workers bill of rights – cost of services would go up so cities wouldn't be able to use those services.
- Accountability – when offenders go to the hospital make sure that they get the services they need (e.g., mental health, housing, etc.) so they aren't released back into the community to reoffend.
- Affordable housing – provide housing that people can actually buy instead of rent.

Public Comment

- More timely communication and outreach was requested for any further public forums.
- Questions about excess land:

It was explained that the County owns thousands of pieces of land, some were purchased but never used for their intended use so they may become surplus. Recent changes in state law allow us to sell it for less than fair market value for certain uses like affordable housing. The money would stay with whatever agency originally purchased it. If the general fund

owned it, we could not sell it for less than fair market value, but the proceeds could be used for affordable housing. This would allow more options for all of the other county funds that actually own the land.

What stops builders from building the higher end affordable housing in the higher end areas and the lower end affordable housing in the lower end areas – we want to focus on equity and social justice.

Is there any kind of oversight to make sure there are no sweetheart deals coming along with this program? Should be fair market value for the land, regardless of what the use is.

In the Growth Management Act, in incentivizing affordable housing, if the developer gets the property for below market value and they don't have to pay property taxes for 6-12 years that doesn't help the community that needs the services.

- Ranked-choice voting and multi-member districts – it seems as though a lot of people feel they aren't being adequately represented by their King County Councilmembers and that services are not necessarily being directed towards them to the same degree that they are needed. Ranked-choice voting and multi-member districts could potentially help alleviate that. Our current system is the top two, which doesn't necessarily reflect the full spectrum of beliefs, philosophies and desires of our citizenry. Gives people more options and information.

Ranked-choice voting could really help sort through the strengths and weaknesses when you have numerous truly good candidates.

- How do we get more people running for office?

The year there were only four candidates for County Executive, there was a very strong incumbent.

- As a veteran, I came home to my community in 2013. I wanted to become a paramedic but there was no institution in Western Washington that afforded that opportunity. I used my GI Bill to get that training in Michigan. When I came back to King County I realized that it does not provide reciprocity to paramedics. Would like to see changes within the County to recognize and take care of its veterans.

Wrap Up

There will be a report that will go to the County Council which will provide recommendations for amendments to the Charter. The Council will consider the recommendations and vote to determine which will move forward to a vote of the people. There will be another public outreach component prior to the Council vote.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:52 p.m.