

Jensen joins commission for King County charter review

By Jim Feehan

A past president of the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce is helping shape the course of King County governance.



Jensen

John Jensen and 20 other people will review the King County charter, which serves as the constitution for county government. The charter provides the basic long-term structure reflecting core values, such as accountability, checks and balances, and promoting an effective and responsive government. A review of the county charter is mandated to be done every 10 years. The governing document, approved by voters in November 1968, took effect May 1, 1969. This review will be completed next year.

Former Gov. Mike Lowry, of Renton, and former King County Councilwoman Lois North, of Seattle, co-chair the commission.

Jensen was nominated by King County Councilman Reagan Dunn in November.

When Dunn was appointed to the council in early 2005 to fill the position vacated by Rob McKenna, Jensen was president of the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce. Dunn said he was impressed with Jensen doubling the number of chamber members in less than two years, and his ability to build relationships outside Newcastle.

"What I enjoy most is working with talented, intelligent and competent people," Jensen said about his work on the charter panel. "Owning my own business

❑ The next Charter Review Commission meeting is from 5:30-7:30 p.m. May 29 in the Seattle Municipal Tower's 40th floor conference room, 700 Fifth Ave., Seattle. Meetings are open to the public. For more information, go to www.metrokc.gov/exec/charter.

for 20 years, I am used to being responsible for everything. It feels like a luxury to have so much expertise and knowledge in one group."

The commission kicked off its work in an informal gathering Feb. 27 and has since held meetings in March and April. During its term, the commission is expected to review the charter and recommend any changes or improvements.

The commission will recommend charter amendments and revisions to the County Council, and recommendations approved by the council will be put on the ballot for voters' approval.

In 1997, the then charter panel recommended things such as establishing an independent Board of Ethics; authorized the council to prepare biennial rather than annual budgets; create a planning commission to advise on land-use issues in unincorporated King County; and form a task force to study and recommend new ways to govern unincorporated King County.

The charter commission will meet during the next 15 months and disband after the November 2008 general election. This is the fifth time the commission has convened since the charter was adopted.



Thank You

The Whitman Family would like to say "Thank You" to all that have given their support with flowers, dinners and overwhelming generosity and friendship. The road to recovery will be a long one, but knowing that we have so many friends to stand by us makes it a little easier. Live life to its fullest.

Craig, Dawn and Mariah