



King County

Ron Sims
King County Executive

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION

Mark Yango
Charter Review Coordinator

701 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3210
Seattle, Washington 98104

King County Charter Review Commission
Governmental Structure Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes – November 13, 2007
KC Chinook Bldg., 5:00pm-8:00pm

The meeting of the King County Charter Review Commission, Governmental Structure Subcommittee was called to order at 5:12 p.m.

Commission members in attendance :

Lois North
Sarah Rindlaub
Kirstin Haugen
John Jensen
Greg Hirakawa

Absent:

Staff :

Mark Yango, Charter Review Coordinator
Corrie Watterson Bryant, Project Manager, Charter Review Commission

Council and PAO Staff:

Ross Baker, Chief of Staff, King County Council
Mike Sinsky, Prosecuting Attorney's Office

1. Opening Remarks and Introductions

There was an attendance of 5 commissioners. 6 is needed for a quorum. Consequently, the minutes from the October 15th meeting could not be approved. 5:54 pm, another commissioner joined the meeting. A quorum was available.

2. Partisanship Presentation – Mark Yango

Mark briefly explained the background on partisanship vs. nonpartisanship, current opinions, and research and analysis done. Lois N. pointed out that although she is a nonpartisanship advocate, she doesn't believe that a recommendation that this issue go to the voters would ever pass through the council. Sarah R. doesn't see this as a big issue and doesn't hear about this as topic of conversation. Mark suggests that perhaps need to think about if there are any significant flaws with the current partisan system and if there is, would there be significant improvements by moving to another system.

Since there isn't a quorum, it was decided to table further discussion until after the general meeting next week of the commission of the whole. There will be speakers from both parties doing presentations.

3. Initiative Process

Mark gave a brief background on the process and the research analysis. Suggested questions to revisit in the process are:

1. Should citizens be allowed to propose charter amendments through the citizen's initiative process and if so, what's the right signature permits for charter amendments?
2. Should they be raised or remain the same?
3. Size of the majority?

Charter currently allows citizen's initiatives for ordinances but not explicitly stated that it's allowed for charter amendments. It also defines a general process for submittal of initiatives for ballot. Now, there is a State Supreme Court decision that allows citizens initiatives on the ballot for charter amendments but the charter does not define how that process should be. Mark also explained that in his research of other "home rule" charter counties, the process for initiatives were all very similar.

Some suggested options:

1. Take no action since that would be the easiest to do.
2. Not permit citizen initiatives for charter amendments.
3. Allow citizen initiatives at current signature threshold
4. Allow citizen initiatives but create a greater signature threshold

ACTION: Moved, seconded and agreed that committee is in favor of the citizen's initiative process. This action has effectively eliminated option #2.

Next step would be to determine/set standards and thresholds for process of citizen's initiatives. After some discussion, it was agreed that the signature threshold be based on the last county executive race.

ACTION: Moved, seconded and agreed that the signature threshold will be based on the last county executive race.

Next step will be to develop language on procedures which seems to be fairly standard throughout other home rule charter counties. Mark offered to draft some language for review.

4. Elected Qualifications:

Mark spoke briefly on the qualifications research on the Assessor, Sheriff and an Election's Director. This could be used as additional qualifications that could be put into the charter. He also spoke briefly on elected charter commissioners.

Sarah adjourned the meeting at: 6:48 pm

Respectfully submitted by Charlotte Ohashi