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KING COUNTY  
2007-2008  
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING

BEFORE :

TARA JO HEINECKE, (CHAIRPERSON), COMMISSIONER  
TERRY LAVENDER, COMMISSIONER  
JULIA PATTERSON, COUNCILMEMBER  
JOHN JENSEN, COMMISSIONER

ALSO PRESENT :

KIRSTIN HAUGEN, COMMISSIONER

Kent Senior Center  
600 East Smith Street  
Kent, Washington

6:30 p.m.

June 28, 2007

## 1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 (The public hearing commenced at 6:38 p.m.)

3 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Hello. My name is Tara Jo  
4 Heinecke, and I'll be chairing tonight. I'd like to welcome  
5 all -- welcome all of you to the public hearing on the King  
6 County Charter. Thank you for taking the time to come  
7 participate in your local government and weathering the  
8 rainstorm I understand that -- that some of us crossed  
9 through to get here.

10 I'd like to introduce some of my fellow commissioners  
11 here. John Jensen from Newcastle, and I saw Kirstin Haugen  
12 from the North Seattle area, James Williams from the Federal  
13 Way area, and Allan Munro from West Seattle, Terry Lavender  
14 from over in the Woodinville area and Eastern King County.

15 Altogether there are about 21 commissioners. Our  
16 chairs -- we have co-chairs who aren't with us tonight.  
17 That's Mike Lowry, our former governor, and Lois North, who  
18 was one of the original freeholders, are co-chairing the  
19 commission.

20 We've been holding these meetings in all nine of the  
21 council districts. We're about two-thirds of the way  
22 through these hearings, so there are a couple more coming up  
23 yet in Auburn and the Black Diamond area in the near future.

24 Our meeting format -- I also want to introduce you to  
25 some of our staff; I'm sorry. Mark Yango is kind of our

1       lead staff person for the commission; Corrie Watterson, and  
2       Charlotte Ohashi is doing registration table back there.  
3       They spend a lot of time helping to put together minutes  
4       from all of these meetings and keep us, as commissioners, on  
5       task. So we appreciate everything they do in setting these  
6       meetings up for us and helping us to keep things moving  
7       along.

8             Our meeting tonight is focused on hearing from you and  
9       what your thoughts and ideas are about the King County  
10      Charter. The charter commission is formed about once every  
11      ten years. And the purpose of the commission is to hear  
12      from community groups and public citizens about what you  
13      view as the needs for the next decade of our county  
14      government and how or if our county charter, which  
15      essentially is our constitution, should be amended to  
16      prepare for the coming decade and what our future needs for  
17      county government might be. So we're open to any and all of  
18      your ideas.

19            We've had testimony from a number of different  
20      community groups such as the League of Women Voters and the  
21      Suburban Cities Association, other kinds of groups. There  
22      have been a number of suggestions relating to election  
23      reform and publicly financing campaigns, whether or not  
24      certain positions should be appointed versus elected, such  
25      as the county auditor and the sheriff and the elections

1 chief.

2 We've had other folks that came forward with ideas  
3 about what they viewed as more sort of community needs,  
4 integration issues, and the homelessness plight -- the  
5 homeless projects out there. So we're open to any and all  
6 thoughts that you have on any of those ideas that have  
7 already been brought forward or any new ideas that you might  
8 have.

9 The commission is appointed by the county executive,  
10 Ron Sims, and we're confirmed by the county council. Our --  
11 our work will take us, from start to finish we're told to  
12 expect it to take about a year. We've been meeting since  
13 February, I believe, is when we had our first meeting, so  
14 we're about maybe a third of the way through this process  
15 and getting to know each other actually very well in the  
16 process, which is a bonus I think.

17 So at this time I'm going to ask Mark if he'd like to  
18 go through a PowerPoint presentation that the staff has  
19 prepared to give you more of an overview of the work of the  
20 commission and the purpose of the commission.

21 Thank you, Mark.

22 MARK YANGO: Hello, everyone. I'm Mark Yango, the  
23 charter review coordinator. I've been staffed here since  
24 February. There are a couple of slides. We have  
25 presentations in the back for your -- for your own leisure,

1 but there are a couple slides there on King County  
2 government services provided. I'm going to skip over that  
3 because we really want to hear from you. And we have a ton  
4 of -- we have a ton of literature at the table to talk about  
5 the kind of services, so I'm going to just start off by  
6 giving you a little bit of description of what the King  
7 County Charter is.

8 The charter is essentially our blueprint for King  
9 County government. It's our county constitution. It is  
10 subject to the laws of the U.S. and the State of Washington.  
11 It's a creature of the state, so... Also, county -- also  
12 the county government laws and actions have to be consistent  
13 with the -- with the charter.

14 So one thing I did want to mention is that the charter  
15 is 40 years old today. It was adopted in May of 1969 and  
16 has withstood the test of time with relatively few changes  
17 up until the 1990s.

18 Now, what's a charter issue? There are three criteria  
19 for things to be termed an issue. Firstly, the issue can  
20 only be resolved by changing the charter by amendment. And  
21 it's not -- it cannot be changed by ordinance or  
22 administrative action. It also has to be -- exist over the  
23 long term. It's not merely a specific, immediate concern.  
24 And, finally, charter issues have to address core values of  
25 the charter, things like checks and balances, accountability

1 and merit.

2 So amendments that we've seen in the past, back in  
3 2004, a charter amendment was reducing the size of the King  
4 County Council from 13 to 9 which was passed by the people;  
5 guaranteeing freedom of religion and conscience to citizens;  
6 prohibiting public spending for religious purposes which, in  
7 2001, was passed by the people; things like updating the  
8 county's anti-discrimination provision, which occurred in  
9 '98 -- 1988 and 1977, which did not go to the ballot. So,  
10 as you could see, the -- the breadth of possible amendments  
11 can be -- is very varied.

12 Here's just a time line of the life of the charter. As  
13 you can see, at the right, 2007-2008 is when we're convening  
14 and the adoption, 1969. The Charter Review Commissions, the  
15 first one, second, and third, relatively minor changes  
16 happened there. And then once the county merged with Metro  
17 and we expanded the council from 9 to 13, a lot more  
18 amendments changed in the charter.

19 How can the charter be amended? First -- first one is,  
20 you're looking at it, the Charter Review Commission. The  
21 commission will send the minutes to the council, and the  
22 council has the authority to approve or reject any of the  
23 amendments. And then whether they put it onto the ballot  
24 or -- if they put it on the ballot, the citizens can vote on  
25 the amendments that the commission -- commission proposes.

1           The second way is the county council. The county  
2 council has the authority to initiate their own charter  
3 amendments to put on the ballot.

4           And, lastly, we do have a citizen initiative process  
5 which was a result from a court decision back in 2004 where  
6 citizens can directly initiate the charter amendment through  
7 petitions, gathering signatures.

8           Now, just a little bit about our process. There's four  
9 major phases. First, from February '07 to August '07, we're  
10 gathering issues, holding public hearings. Again, this is  
11 the seventh hearing of nine. And then from September to  
12 February '08, we're going to be deliberating on all the  
13 issues that you all recommend and we'll prioritize our  
14 subcommittees and -- and come up with our proposals for  
15 charter amendments.

16           Then in March of 2008 we'll go back to the public with  
17 our laundry list of amendments to get feedback on that.  
18 Finally, we will transmit our proposals to the county  
19 council for their adoption.

20           Tara pointed out some issues already raised by  
21 citizens, so I don't want to be redundant on this slide,  
22 things like appointed versus elected positions or an  
23 electoral system, but, again, we need your input tonight.  
24 So some questions to think about when you come up here,  
25 first one, what major regional issues need to be addressed

1       now over the next ten years? Second question: How can King  
2       County government simultaneously meet the needs of both the  
3       urban and rural residents? And lastly: King County seeks  
4       to be an accountable, efficient, effective, and fair  
5       government for its residents. Is it living up to these  
6       standards?

7               I think before we bring people up, you may want to have  
8       Councilmember Patterson say a few words about the  
9       commission.

10               COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON: Thank you very much.  
11       And this is the first time I've been through the experience  
12       of a charter review as an elected official of the King  
13       County Council, so it's a new and fascinating experience for  
14       me as well. And I just want to thank you folks for  
15       volunteering your time for the benefit of the people of King  
16       County and really look forward to the recommendations that  
17       you make to the King County Council.

18               We are very serious about wanting your input and your  
19       recommendations after you go through this deliberate  
20       process, so thanks so much for the dedication of your time.  
21       Thank you. And thanks to everyone who came this evening. I  
22       look forward to hearing what it is that you have to say to  
23       us. Thank you.

24               CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you, Julia.

25               So we'll ask speakers to please come to the podium and

1 use the microphone so that everybody can hear you. It would  
2 be helpful if you'd state your name and tell us where you  
3 live. And then we -- we have been putting some time limits  
4 on how long people speak to make sure that everybody has an  
5 opportunity to speak. It appears that we have about a dozen  
6 who may want to speak and some might come in yet. So at the  
7 moment, I don't think that we need to stick to a real rigid  
8 time frame. And if, at the end of the process, you think of  
9 something else that -- that you hadn't had the opportunity  
10 to mention before, you'll have the opportunity again.

11 So you may also get some questions from our  
12 commissioners here who might want some further clarification  
13 about your ideas, too, so be prepared to answer those  
14 questions when they come.

15 And on the list, the first person I have signed in is  
16 Charles Cortes. Did I say that right? Hi, Charles. Did  
17 you have something that you'd like to speak to at this time?

18 CHARLES CORTES: No.

19 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Okay. Well, fine.

20 Bob Loeliger.

21 BOB LOELIGER: Good evening. My name is Bob  
22 Loeliger. I live on the West Hill of Kent. I live in the  
23 Fifth County District.

24 THE COURT REPORTER: I can't hear.

25 BOB LOELIGER: I'm a representative. I represent

1 the Democratic 33rd Legislative District on the Legislative  
2 Action Committee, and I'm elected democratic PCO from the  
3 West Hill of Kent.

4 And I would like to speak to, actually, two issues on  
5 both the address our election -- elections. One is campaign  
6 finances reform. That would be to finance candidates for  
7 county positions. This, I believe, is the best way to  
8 represent the people with the minimum amount of  
9 expenditures. And also it would -- it minimizes the outside  
10 interests of special interests and corporate -- corporate  
11 money to the effect of elections.

12 The second issue is instant runoff voting. I think  
13 that in order to avoid situations like we had in 2006 with  
14 election contention, if we had an instant runoff voting  
15 system where you can -- you can rate or preference for  
16 candidates, this is the best way to take care of our  
17 elections.

18 I attended the elections -- there was an elections  
19 meeting up in University Heights this past Monday, and they  
20 had a representative from the elector -- county elector  
21 speak to the -- the upcoming elections with the mail-in  
22 voting, and there was a lot of -- lot of concern about using  
23 private -- private machines to tally our votes using private  
24 software which was minimally reviewed. And I understand  
25 that if we did go to an instant runoff voting system, it

1 would be much more complicated. It would definitely involve  
2 machines, but we would have to have an open source software  
3 so we could definitely review and get a paper -- paper  
4 report of the -- of the election. These are both long-term  
5 issues which I feel very strongly about.

6 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Do any of the commissioners  
7 have questions of Bob?

8 (No response.)

9 BOB LOELIGER: Thank you very much.

10 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: I have a question, Bob. On  
11 the instant runoff voting, I've heard different people talk  
12 about different versions of that.

13 Would your preference be for the top vote-getters  
14 irrespective of what party they may have come from or -- or  
15 would you be doing instant runoff within a party's  
16 candidate?

17 BOB LOELIGER: Well, thank you. There are -- I  
18 would -- I would propose to have it open to all parties  
19 without any limits to -- it wouldn't be like a primary. It  
20 wouldn't be limited to representatives from each party. It  
21 would be open to the voters to decide who their preferences  
22 are for the -- for the elected positions.

23 My model was -- is based on the instant runoff floating  
24 group, irvwa.org. That's -- that's my source of my  
25 information right now, and that's what we do for review for

1 all -- all comers. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you.

3 Miriam Helgeland. Did I say that right?

4 MIRIAM HELGELAND: Yes.

5 I'm Miriam -- Miriam Helgeland. I live on the West  
6 Hill.

7 THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry; I can't hear at  
8 all.

9 MIRIAM HELGELAND: Did you turn it off? Is it on  
10 now?

11 Miriam Helgeland, I live on the West Hill in Council  
12 District No. 7. I was a member of the charter review  
13 commission in 1987, and I know that you are going through a  
14 lot of deliberations. I also know that the county council  
15 accepts very few of the review commissions' recommendations,  
16 and sometimes they make amendments of their own.

17 I'd like to see some way of requiring that the  
18 recommendations go directly to the ballot. The initiative  
19 process, which was a priority for the 1997 commission, and  
20 which became a reality through the court, could perhaps fill  
21 that need so that the public could change the charter  
22 amendments.

23 Past commissions have considered changing county  
24 elections to nonpartisan. In fact, the 1997 commission  
25 recommended that we should, and I quote, "allow the voters

1 to determine whether elected offices for the positions of  
2 King County Executive, council, and assessor should be  
3 partisan or not partisan."

4 I recommend that again and hope. I would go -- if you  
5 want to go further, of course, you could recommend they  
6 actually be nonpartisan. This would make it easier for the  
7 city councilpersons to work with the county because they are  
8 non -- city council people are elected nonpartisan. And I  
9 hope you don't do anything drastic with the regional  
10 committees which involve the cities because we really want  
11 to have a regional governor.

12 I would also prefer that the office of the County  
13 Elections Director remain an appointed position. That  
14 office requires someone with expertise in orchestrating all  
15 the activities involved in an election. If -- if we elect  
16 people to make policy, not manage a department, that person,  
17 of course, should not be affiliated with a political party.

18 That concludes what I was going to say, but I'm glad  
19 that Bob brought up the -- let's see -- brought up the  
20 public financing for campaigns. There's a group called the  
21 Clean Elections that's pushing that, and they have done it  
22 in Maine and Arizona and apparently are very happy with it  
23 and apparently does not cost a whole lot for each taxpayer.

24 I also agree with instant runoff elections, and I would  
25 like to see it also on a nonpartisan basis, of course,

1       because it bothers me that somebody -- somebody comes up  
2       from the primaries on one party, and there weren't very many  
3       votes for that person because they happen to be in a  
4       district which was all one party, and that person is still  
5       up there in the primary -- in the general election.

6               The people -- not very many people vote in the  
7       primaries, so that's why I would like instant runoff to have  
8       everybody voting on the issue.

9               CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you, Miriam.

10              Do the commissioners have questions? Terry?

11              COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: You talked about the  
12       regional committees, and in the charter, the regional  
13       committees have 12 members, six of whom are county  
14       councilmembers. And now -- and there's three regional  
15       committees. So now that there are only nine county  
16       councilmembers, it becomes very difficult for them to  
17       fulfill that role and all of their others, so I guess -- I'm  
18       not --

19              MIRIAM HELGELAND: What have -- what have they  
20       done so far?

21              COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: Well, somebody who  
22       actually does it would have to answer, but it seems to me  
23       like that's -- that means that they'd have to be on at least  
24       two, and sometimes three regional committees.

25              MIRIAM HELGELAND: Well, I'm not sure that the

1 council couldn't tackle that -- tackle that problem, maybe  
2 having fewer councilmembers on the committee, which would  
3 put them in maybe not as good a position.

4 I went to several of the regional committee meetings  
5 when they first started, and the council was over --  
6 overpowering the city people considerably. I might say that  
7 at that very first meeting, the council sat up at their  
8 eye-level thing, and the -- they put the city people down  
9 below. This was not good, based on that, but also they did  
10 not have chairmen. Some of those committees were not even  
11 city people. I think that has changed too. In other words  
12 they've come around.

13 But when we have the mayor speak to our group,  
14 sometimes some of them are quite adamant about the fact that  
15 it's hard to get along with the county. It shouldn't be.  
16 So I definitely don't want the regional committees  
17 obliterated but fixed somewhat.

18 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you, Miriam.

19 Any other commissioners have questions at this time?

20 (No response.)

21 Okay. Goodspaceguy Nelson.

22 GOODSPACEGUY NELSON: I want to -- I want to thank  
23 the members of the council of this charter review commission  
24 for volunteering their time. I consider this to be quite  
25 important, and so this is why I'm here for the third time.

1           My name is Goodspaceguy Nelson. I legally added  
2           Goodspaceguy to my name because I'm an advocate for  
3           technological advancement, and we just -- just started the  
4           space age.

5           The auditor's office: I believe the auditor's office  
6           should be elected so the auditor reports to the people. I  
7           think this would make the auditing function much more  
8           effective. The auditing function should be both financial  
9           and performance audits so that, hopefully, by making this  
10          office an elected office, we can get more bang for our  
11          dollars. So the auditors can really search for ways that  
12          our government can save money and we taxpayers can get more  
13          for our dollars.

14          On the libraries, King County Library System is a  
15          rather good system, but it could be much better.  
16          Frequently, when people are available to go to the library,  
17          it's closed. And more libraries are being built to be  
18          closed. So if you want to go to the library at 8:00 in the  
19          morning, you, the owners -- in my opinion, the people are  
20          the owners of the King County Library. If you want to go to  
21          your library in 8:00 in the morning, you can't, because it's  
22          closed. If you're suffering from insomnia and you want to  
23          go to the library at 10:00 at night, you can't, because it's  
24          closed.

25          So the library is one of the main methods of continuing

1 education for people after they graduate from school. And  
2 to get a more educated citizenry, it's important that the  
3 libraries be open at the citizens' convenience, not at the  
4 convenience of the library staff.

5 Now the King County Council appoints or ratifies the  
6 appointments of the trustees, so I don't know quite how to  
7 do this, but for you on the charter review commission, if  
8 you could think of some way that, when reviewing nominees  
9 for appointment to the King County Library Board, you find  
10 out if they'll get the libraries open. It doesn't make  
11 sense to build new libraries while we're keeping the old  
12 libraries open less than they should be open. So I don't  
13 quite know how that will fit into the charter, but I'll let  
14 you on the charter commission try to figure that out.

15 Compensation: Currently I think the King County  
16 executive is compensated at one and a half times the amount  
17 that a councilmember receives.

18 Now, I like to pinch pennies, so I don't spend very  
19 much money. One of my heroes is Gandhi, and Gandhi also  
20 didn't spend very much money. And so paying the King County  
21 executive one and a half times the compensation than the  
22 councilmembers I think is too much. We have a lot of able  
23 people on the council approved who just as easily could be  
24 county executive. And so I'd like to pinch some pennies  
25 here and reduce that compensation to perhaps one and quarter

1 times what a councilmember receives.

2 Now, as I live in the eighth district, and I'm a  
3 candidate for King County council. And thus I'm -- because  
4 we're on a district system, I'm forced to run against a  
5 councilmember I don't want to run against, but that's the  
6 system. I either run against the councilmember from the  
7 eighth district or I don't run. So I would much prefer to  
8 have an at-large system where we elect councilmembers at  
9 large. That way if we elected councilmembers at large, you  
10 can vote for all your councilmembers.

11 So currently we have nine councilmembers, and you only  
12 get to vote for one of the nine councilmembers who make the  
13 rules and regulations that affect your life. It would be so  
14 much nicer if we had staggered elections, say, electing  
15 perhaps three councilmembers at each -- each year. And so  
16 throughout the course of three, four years, you get to vote  
17 on them all depending on how many councilmembers we have.

18 Suppose we change the number of councilmembers to 12,  
19 and we vote for three councilmembers each year, through a  
20 period of four years, you'll have the right to vote on all  
21 12 councilmembers who are going to shape the framework under  
22 which we live.

23 I think that's all I want to say right at this point.  
24 Are there any questions?

25 COMMISSIONER JENSEN: Not really a question.

1 [Inaudible.]

2 COMMISSIONER JENSEN: The hours of operation of  
3 the library, for example, would be something that we  
4 would -- we would specifically look at, but maybe looking at  
5 the appointment of the board is something that can be done  
6 that would be [inaudible] responsiveness of the library  
7 system to [inaudible].

8 GOODSPACEGUY NELSON: So the councilmembers do --  
9 do ratify or appoint the board -- board nominations do go  
10 through the King County Council?

11 COMMISSIONER JENSEN: I'm just saying that would  
12 be a charge -- that would be something that we would -- we  
13 would be able to address rather than, say, the specific  
14 operation of the library.

15 GOODSPACEGUY NELSON: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you. Are there any  
17 other questions, councilmembers?

18 (No response.)

19 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Okay. Thank you.

20 Steve Hunter. Not at this time?

21 Lorri Peasley? Lorri?

22 Larry Clements? Hi, Larry. Come on up.

23 For those of you that -- that may be a little camera  
24 shy, we do have cards at the registration table. So if you  
25 prefer to submit a written question or an anonymous

1 question, you're free to do that as well.

2 LARRY CLEMENTS: Okay. There were six items that  
3 were listed in the card that I received in the mail, and I'd  
4 like to respond to all six of them.

5 THE COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry; could you hold the  
6 microphone closer.

7 LARRY CLEMENTS: Is that better? All right.  
8 First one is an electable -- electing the director of  
9 elections. Taxpayers should get full control of the  
10 election process. If an elected official fails in its job,  
11 it should be fired in either an election or a recall  
12 election. And that's very simple, that it would be put on  
13 the -- in the state -- state constitution.

14 Amendment 2, better representation for residences of  
15 unincorporated areas. The only way for this to work is to  
16 reduce the power of the large city vote, which can be done  
17 and most effectively by the initiative process, and as  
18 evidence of the effect of the elected office is heavily  
19 centered in the Seattle area. And that should be changed  
20 because it doesn't give the right representation to the  
21 people in outlying or smaller areas. I don't -- I don't  
22 have any suggestions on how to do it, but it ought to be  
23 changed.

24 No. 3, prohibiting paid signature gathering for  
25 campaigns. Now, I do not support paying people to gather

1 signatures. I take it if they can't do it voluntarily on  
2 their own time, it should be -- it should be a choice, of  
3 course. To have them get paid I think is not the right way.  
4 If we take that privilege away, then we will have lost even  
5 more of our freedoms. Let them alone; that's what I say.

6 No. 4, enacting whistleblower protection for county  
7 employees. This should be included in our state  
8 constitution. Why shouldn't a person be free to express his  
9 own feelings about any issue in this -- in this state in  
10 which we live whether we're a county employee or not?

11 Making county council positions nonpartisan. King  
12 County is a huge county, but the issues we face as a county  
13 are no less important than those elected officials who face  
14 the issues at state level. I say forget the issue.

15 No. 6, public funding for campaigns. It would be  
16 better to restrict the funds for any campaign regardless of  
17 public position, authority, or wealth. To do otherwise --  
18 otherwise would tend to prohibit reasonable minds from  
19 entering the election process.

20 Now I want to describe the issues that has personal  
21 impact on my own courses, my own property taxes. For the  
22 year 2006, my property taxes were increased almost 64  
23 percent, and for the year 2007, this year, and next year,  
24 they will go up another 9 percent. I don't think that's  
25 fair. I don't imagine anybody here thinks it's fair. And I

1 don't understand the rationale for allowing that to happen.  
2 60 in -- in two years, it went up almost 75 percent. I  
3 think the county council ought to give that -- be able to  
4 give people some relief from it. I don't know if it  
5 involves setting a percent limit on increase in property  
6 taxes, but that's my position. I would support that.

7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you, Larry.

9 Do the commissioners have questions of Larry?

10 (No response.)

11 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Okay. Thank you very much.

12 We appreciate your coming out tonight.

13 Marysue Deckler (phonetic). I see her signed in here  
14 and I don't see her at the moment, so she may have stepped  
15 out.

16 MS. OHASHI: She's gone.

17 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Margaret Hart. Did I say  
18 that right?

19 CITIZEN: [Inaudible.]

20 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Harto, I'm sorry. Okay,  
21 thank you.

22 Larry Harto? No?

23 Janet Herron?

24 JANET HERRON: Not at this time.

25 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Okay. That exhausts the

1 list unless anybody else had slipped in after I received the  
2 list. So at this point, if anybody has any additional  
3 comments that maybe has spoken earlier, you're free to come  
4 up and make those. And I'd ask commissioners if there were  
5 questions about issues that may not have surfaced here but  
6 we've heard elsewhere that you'd like to get feedback from  
7 this group assembled.

8 COMMISSIONER JENSEN: I was waiting until  
9 everybody was done so I could make sure we got to everybody.  
10 [Inaudible.]

11 I was curious when, Miriam, you were talking about the  
12 Charter Review Commission's recommendations going directly  
13 on to the ballot. And I'm learning a little bit, and I  
14 think Allan probably has a better understanding, but my  
15 understanding is that we are an appointed commission, and  
16 that's why it goes through essentially the filter of the  
17 council which is elected, but I know in other counties the  
18 charter review commission is elected, and then their  
19 recommendations do go straight to the ballot. So is that  
20 something that you would comment on?

21 MIRIAM HELGELAND: [Inaudible.]

22 COMMISSIONER JENSEN: They're going to ask you to  
23 come up and speak at the mic.

24 MIRIAM HELGELAND: We talked about that as the  
25 reason that it couldn't be done. I wish there some way it

1       could be. And, however, since we didn't think the  
2       initiative could be done either, according to the charter,  
3       and it was, so maybe that would change. It's just that a  
4       council is not going to put something on that will change  
5       the way they get elected because that's their meat and  
6       potatoes, I guess.

7               Somebody in our group found something in the charter,  
8       and I forgot where it is -- I have to look -- that says  
9       maybe it can be done. And I had -- I had to look after she  
10      told me, and I'm not sure that I can do it again. Anyway,  
11      I'd certainly like to see something other than just  
12      depending on the council itself.

13             It's true that the state -- the constitution cannot be  
14      changed by initiative or by the people. That's maybe a  
15      little different because it's so big, but I'd like to see  
16      some other way to change it, some way to give the people a  
17      chance to change it.

18             CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Goodspaceguy.

19             GOODSPACEGUY NELSON: On the question of the  
20      elected or appointed charter review commission, I think if  
21      the charter review commission were elected, it would give  
22      more credibility in the eyes of the people. Also to make  
23      our democracy stronger, I think it might be better to make  
24      it easier for concerned citizens to bring their initiatives  
25      before the people. Say if the current requirement is 10

1       percent or 8 percent of the vote for the county executive,  
2       if you have to get that many signatures, that's a really  
3       difficult thing to do. But let's say they were reduced, I  
4       don't know that the magic amount would be, but say it was  
5       reduced in half to -- to 5 percent or 4 percent of the vote  
6       for the county executive, that would be a lot easier for the  
7       people to participate in our democracy by bringing  
8       initiatives before the voters.

9             Thank you.

10            CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you.

11            Anybody else? Bob Loeliger.

12            BOB LOELIGER: Thank you again.

13            I'm not sure if tax policies are part of the charter,  
14       but, honestly, I know one of the larger issues, one of the  
15       larger policies in the county involve transportation, as  
16       Julia knows well. She had a great town hall meeting in  
17       Renton not too long ago which I attended.

18            But I think one of the best ways that we can -- we can  
19       address transportation in this county would be to do some  
20       tax shifting. I would like to reduce our property taxes  
21       because property taxes are very regressive with the -- with  
22       the way inflation is -- is just boosting the prices of  
23       houses' taxes on property is going up severely. But if we  
24       could -- we could put additional taxes on gasoline and  
25       petroleum products, I think that would be a disincentive for

1 driving. It would give some -- little more flexibility for  
2 what we can do with the extra money. We could put more  
3 money in the infrastructure. It would be nice if all our  
4 buses were free, tax supported, so people could ride buses  
5 without -- without any cost. I would -- I would really  
6 support raising taxes on gasoline.

7 I want to support the -- on a separate issue, I'd like  
8 to support the prohibition of paid signature gatherers for  
9 initiatives. I really got into the initiative process for  
10 the 937 initiative which was a clean air initiative two  
11 years ago. I was the top signature gatherer for King  
12 County, and I was up against -- I would work a lot of the  
13 farmers markets. And oftentimes there were signature  
14 gatherers alongside me that knew nothing about the issues,  
15 but they had several clipboards taking signatures on all --  
16 a variety of initiatives. And I would rather have -- I want  
17 to see activists in our community. I want to see people get  
18 involved in government, and the initiative process is an  
19 excellent way. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you, Bob.

21 Any further comments?

22 COMMISSIONER JENSEN: The instant runoff we're  
23 hearing about, we're hearing about a portion of the instant  
24 runoff and how -- how -- what kind of effects do you see  
25 that's -- expected and unexpected effects do you see coming

1 out of those types of changes?

2 BOB LOELIGER: Well, for one thing, it would avoid  
3 confusion of -- in case you were having a case for a runoff,  
4 you would be able to do it without having additional --  
5 without additional votes, and what happens -- what happens  
6 with the instant runoff voting is the -- is the  
7 bottom -- the candidate with the least number of votes  
8 gathered pushed their votes ahead to the ones that -- it's  
9 only in the case where there is a tie or a very close vote.

10 But in that case, they take the bottom votes and they  
11 reapportion them to the two -- two candidates date which  
12 are -- which are contested. And it's just a way to avoid  
13 confusion. And it does -- it does make the election process  
14 slightly more complicated. And I am concerned about --  
15 about tally machines and voting machines. That is a big  
16 issue right now. So we know it'd have to be -- it would  
17 have to have open source software for the machines so that  
18 there's no doubt, and it's fair and aboveboard.

19 Now, I've heard that it also reduces or eliminates the  
20 need for -- for primaries because you put all the candidates  
21 on -- on the same ballot. I'm concerned about that though  
22 because there's a lot of money involved in campaigning. And  
23 to have nine people running for the same position without  
24 the benefit of a -- being weeded out by a primary would mean  
25 extraordinary expenses. So that's one thing I was -- I was

1           curious about.

2                   COMMISSIONER JENSEN:   Thank you.

3                   CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE:   Terry had a question also.

4                   COMMISSIONER LAVENDER:   Actually, it's not a  
5           question.  I just wanted to clarify something because at a  
6           number of meetings we've heard about the concept of public  
7           financing for campaigns, and it's my understanding that  
8           Washington state law specifically prohibits that at this  
9           time.  So just since it's an idea people continually bring  
10          forward, it's not really something that the Charter Review  
11          Commission can address unless state law was first changed,  
12          so...

13                   BOB LOELIGER:   May I speak to that?

14                   COMMISSIONER LAVENDER:   Mm-hm.

15                   BOB LOELIGER:   It was 1992 when there was  
16          Initiative 134 which addressed elections issues.  And there  
17          was a one line -- one line on that initiative which cut the  
18          public financing for -- for officials.  And prior to that,  
19          we had -- we had councilmembers running on public funds, and  
20          it worked very well, but it was just that one line which  
21          prohibited use of public funds.  And I would like to see  
22          that thrown out and public funding reinstated.

23                   CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE:   Thank you.  Julie?

24                   COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON:   I -- I just wanted to  
25          comment on this topic.  When I was in the state legislature,

1 we introduced legislation to get the process of considering  
2 the idea of publicly financing campaigns, and we couldn't  
3 get the votes in the senate for it, so... So it's an idea  
4 that's been around for a long time that keeps bubbling up to  
5 the surface, but I can't tell you how much time it takes and  
6 how distasteful it is to have to call people and ask people  
7 for money, which I've had -- I've run for public office  
8 eight times now, and it doesn't get any easier, and it never  
9 feels right.

10 However, it is representative of democracy and people  
11 support you. It is an expression of their freedom of  
12 speech, a form of expression to support you in that way.  
13 And so I suppose if everything's working correctly, if your  
14 ideas are in sync with the vast majority of your community,  
15 you can raise money to run, and there's a connection there.

16 But, you know, picking up the telephone and calling  
17 someone and trying to ease into this conversation where you  
18 are asking them to write you a check for your campaign is  
19 very difficult. Some might argue that -- that that task  
20 is -- is good for people, that it's -- it's good for public  
21 officials to have to go through that process, to hear people  
22 say no and to hear people tell you why they won't support  
23 you, and then to hear people say yes and to hear the reason  
24 why they will support you. So it's a complicated issue.

25 I will say that I don't think that most other countries

1 in the world finance their campaigns like we do. I think  
2 that we're relatively unique in that way. And one thing  
3 that might be interesting is to look across the globe and  
4 see how other representative democracies do manage to  
5 finance their public -- their campaigns. I think it's  
6 different. So just some thoughts. Just some thoughts.

7 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Goodspaceguy.

8 GOODSPACEGUY NELSON: Although it's difficult to  
9 finance individual campaigns, it is possible for government  
10 to continue and expand its public financing of campaigns in  
11 general. For example, we have the voters guide. So the  
12 voters guide is very helpful. And we have the video voters  
13 guide.

14 Now, as a candidate, I was allowed two minutes. I  
15 guess being a King County councilmember isn't very  
16 important. So since for an unimportant position like King  
17 County councilmembers, I guess two minutes is enough. But  
18 if some people disagree with me and think that King County  
19 councilmembers are an important position, it might be good  
20 to have several appearances of the King County television  
21 channel.

22 So -- so I think public financing through the voters  
23 guide, the printed published voters guide is very good. And  
24 the state could actually copy King County in that -- that  
25 method, that it would be nice if the state of Washington got

1 out a printed voters guide for the entire state but primary.  
2 That would probably strengthen democracy a bit. And I think  
3 it would be good if King County increased the public  
4 appearances of the candidates on King County television.

5 Now, in any campaign, I opted for mini reporting, which  
6 means my campaign is a small budget campaign, so I'm limited  
7 to \$3,500 for my campaign in addition to my filing fee.  
8 That's not -- I think it's really nice when you have this  
9 mini reporting option that the county has. It's my belief  
10 that when one spends a huge amount of money on campaigns  
11 that it was difficult to raise through special interest  
12 groups, then one is obligated to the special interest groups  
13 rather than to voters. So I think it's -- having a mini  
14 finance campaign is really a nice option that should be  
15 stressed.

16 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you.

17 Are there any questions of Goodspaceguy at this time?  
18 I have a question, if I may.

19 You were talking about a statewide voter guide, and I'm  
20 not clear what -- what you had in mind, one that the State  
21 of Washington would produce that would feature all  
22 candidates at all levels or --

23 GOODSPACEGUY NELSON: That's only if the people  
24 think the primary election is an important election.  
25 Currently -- I ran for governor when the libertarian party

1       existed, I was one of two candidates for -- libertarian  
2       candidates for governor, and there was no statewide voters  
3       guide, and so many people went to the polls not hearing what  
4       my message was, so many voters never knew I was a candidate  
5       until they saw my name on their -- their ballot. Had there  
6       been a voters guide, they would have been -- they would have  
7       known what I was advocating for the state, and so I -- I  
8       lost. I got 44 percent of the majority vote.

9               And then in November, the libertarian party was  
10       destroyed as a major party. So now they only got two  
11       parties left. And so if you're a member of a major party,  
12       you either are a democrat or republican, so you have to  
13       choose one of two. We are no longer a three party state.

14              And I thought that the primary -- statewide primary was  
15       important. And the voters throughout the state should have  
16       been informed by a statewide voters guide. That's why I'm  
17       glad that the -- King County has this -- a countywide  
18       primary voters guide, because in the primary, you see all  
19       the candidates, and you decide which of those candidates are  
20       going on to the general election in November.

21              CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you.

22              Miriam, did you have something?

23              MIRIAM HELGELAND: [Inaudible.]

24              CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Sure. Come on back.

25              MIRIAM HELGELAND: I'd like to comment on the

1 instant runoff voting. One of the things I don't like about  
2 it is that you can vote for your second choice, and maybe  
3 your third, depending on how it's set up. This way if we  
4 really would like to vote for someone and think they'll  
5 never make it, so we vote for somebody else, and it looks  
6 like we will have that chance to vote for our second choice,  
7 and then that person would move up if -- if my first choice  
8 wasn't taken, then that person would be counted -- my second  
9 choice would be counted.

10 COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON: I just wanted to say  
11 that I appreciate your opinion on that and the ideas that  
12 are being expressed on different methods of voting, but I  
13 believe those are all state issues. And --

14 MIRIAM HELGELAND: I'm not sure --

15 COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON: -- maybe I'm missing  
16 something.

17 MIRIAM HELGELAND: Oh, I'm not sure that one is  
18 because didn't Tacoma tie or are they -- and they  
19 actually -- Pierce County, didn't they actually do it there?

20 COMMISSIONER HAUGEN: It's not till next year,  
21 but --

22 COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON: I think --

23 COMMISSIONER HAUGEN: -- they approved it.

24 COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON: This fall.

25 MIRIAM HELGELAND: Next time, okay.

1                   COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON: So let me see if I  
2 understand, Kirstin. So state -- state law gives the  
3 counties the ability to impose that type of voting system if  
4 they choose, but --

5                   COMMISSIONER HAUGEN: (Nods head affirmatively.)

6                   COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON: -- do we currently have  
7 an accounting team in the state of Washington?

8                   COMMISSIONER HAUGEN: I know Pierce County just  
9 approved it. They went through a charter review process  
10 last year. They went through the --

11                  COMMISSIONER JENSEN: She said it's approved by  
12 county -- Pierce County.

13                  COMMISSIONER HAUGEN: Pierce County approved it.  
14 The voters approved it last fall.

15                  MIRIAM HELGELAND: We'll see how it goes this  
16 time.

17                  COMMISSIONER HAUGEN: Right.

18                  CITIZEN: [Inaudible.]

19                  MIRIAM HELGELAND: I just remembered one thing.  
20 When you were talking about financing, in -- in Arizona and  
21 Maine, they had, started out anyway, with just \$5 that  
22 people would put in, and if they got a certain number of  
23 those, then they were allowed to run and so forth and get  
24 public money, but they felt there were so many more people  
25 that contributed to their campaign because it was only \$5

1 and because they knew that that much would make a  
2 difference, then -- then they felt they were getting a wider  
3 acceptance by the public.

4 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you, Miriam.

5 Bob?

6 BOB LOELIGER: It's that kind of financing  
7 opportunity in Maine and Arizona also enables school  
8 teachers and people that wouldn't normally run for office to  
9 become involved. I heard today that you have to be very,  
10 very rich or famous to become president of the United  
11 States. It's very, very selective.

12 I would like to also say, there was three -- three  
13 bills before the legislature this year about publicly  
14 financed campaigns. One was on the local level, which would  
15 enable the local entities to privately or publicly finance  
16 their campaigns. The second one which was -- one which was  
17 near and dear to our governors's heart, Chris -- Chris  
18 Gregoire, she was really alarmed at the 2006 election where  
19 the Builders Association put in a lot of money against --  
20 for the Supreme Court -- Court races in the state. And that  
21 our -- our court should be completely isolated for money.  
22 You shouldn't be able to buy judges.

23 And then the third one was the comprehensive. And that  
24 was all -- all elected officials in the state of Washington  
25 should have publicly funded campaigns. Neither one of those

1 was passed out of legislature. Legislature, they're -- they  
2 like -- they like the feeling of power. They like to be  
3 courted by money, even though it does take effort. But  
4 there's a lot of -- that's just another -- another push for  
5 publicly funded campaigns.

6 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you, Bob.

7 Is there anybody else that has questions or comments to  
8 make at this time or new topics that you'd like to raise?  
9 Come on back up.

10 Goodspaceguy Nelson.

11 GOODSPACEGUY NELSON: Another argument: As I  
12 mentioned in the past at previous meetings, I'm in favor of  
13 going to a nonpartisan ballot because many people are  
14 neither democrat nor republican, and so they're certainly  
15 excluded by the partisan ballot. And if we go to every  
16 election a non- -- every position a nonpartisan position,  
17 everyone in our democracy can participate.

18 I heard -- when we changed our voting method, I heard  
19 many complaints of people were unhappy that they were not  
20 able to vote for the person of their choice because they  
21 were of the other -- other party. So if we go to  
22 nonpartisan elections of each office, even though they may  
23 be partisan in other states, then the people in Washington,  
24 they can vote for their -- their choice of whose who's going  
25 to lead them. And so I think nonpartisan elections really

1           strengthens the -- the power of the voter.

2                       CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Thank you.

3           Julia, did you want to speak to that? Okay?

4           I know that you have run in both nonpartisan and in  
5 partisan elections over the years because you started out as  
6 a city councilmember, so I was curious actually as to  
7 whether or not you had a strong feeling one way or another.

8                       COUNCILMEMBER PATTERSON: Well, I've -- I've run  
9 for the King County Council twice in a partisan position,  
10 and I understand the pros and the cons. I think you folks  
11 probably understand them better than I do because you've  
12 been having these meetings, but the way I think about it is  
13 that the pros of having a partisan are that a partisan label  
14 gives the public a general sense of -- of political  
15 perspective of the individual that's running.

16           So if you're a democrat -- I'm going to generalize  
17 greatly here -- you know that democrats in general believe  
18 the government can make a positive difference in people's  
19 lives. You know that they believe that. And if you're a  
20 republican, you know that, generally speaking, people who  
21 are republicans believe that people are better off if  
22 there's not so much government in your life. And that's a  
23 huge, broad definition of democrat and republican in my  
24 perspective, but at least the label gives you that much. So  
25 right off the bat you know something, be it very broad about

1 those individuals who are running.

2 The pros associated with having a nonpartisan King  
3 County Council, the pros are that when you label people and  
4 you put a label on them and you call them something, then  
5 they tend to herd together. And so we have caucuses at the  
6 King County Council where the democrats meet to discuss  
7 issues and republicans meet to discuss issues. We talk  
8 about issues exclusively within their little herd. And  
9 when -- when you label people, they -- it's just kind of a  
10 natural inclination for people to, if you are something and  
11 you're not that other thing over there, and the argument is  
12 that that could divide us unnecessarily, and most of our  
13 issues are not partisan.

14 So there -- it's -- it's not simple. There's a reason  
15 why this has been hanging around for a while, and I  
16 understand that, so that's all I can say.

17 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: That's it? Thank you.

18 How are we doing on time, Mark, in terms of wrapping up  
19 if we don't have any further speakers? Is it too early or  
20 are we --

21 MARK YANGO: [Inaudible.]

22 CHAIRPERSON HEINECKE: Okay. Unless there's  
23 somebody that has anything new that they'd like to bring to  
24 the podium, I want to thank everybody for coming and  
25 participating tonight. We have really learned a lot from

1 going out in the respective communities. And I know that  
2 all of my commissioner -- fellow commissioners share --  
3 share our appreciation for the fact that you took the time  
4 out of your personal life and away from your family to come  
5 and share your thoughts with us.

6 We will be holding community forums again later in the  
7 year, late fall/early winter, when we have formulated and  
8 finished analyzing the information we've taken in and  
9 formulated some recommendations. We will be bringing those  
10 back out to you for community feedback, so I hope that  
11 you'll come back at that time, and then we can share with  
12 you the conclusions that we've -- we've come to at that  
13 point and get your feedback before we forward that  
14 information then on to the county council and to Executive  
15 Sims.

16 Thank you very much for coming out tonight.

17 (Applause.)

18 (Meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.)

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I, Eva P. Jankovits, Certified Court Reporter, do hereby certify that the foregoing proceedings were stenographically reported by me and that this transcript was prepared by me and is a true, complete, and accurate transcription of same to the best of my ability.

Dated the 5th day of July 2007.

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Eva P. Jankovits  
Notary Public in and for the State  
of Washington, residing at  
Seattle. Commission expires  
September 29, 2009.

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Commission Public Hearing

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NOTICE RE FILING OF ORIGINAL DEPOSITION

Case Name: KING COUNTY 2007-2008 CHARTER  
REVIEW COMMISSION PUBLIC  
HEARING

Venue:

Cause No.:

Witness:

Taken: June 28, 2007

Enclosed is the original sealed transcript of  
KING COUNTY 2007-2008 CHARTER REVIEW  
COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING.

The original signature page and changes,  
if any, received by this office will be  
forwarded to all counsel.

. . . . .  
EVA P. JANKOVITS, CCR

cc: File  
Mark Yango