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KING COUNTY  
2007-2008  
CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING

BEFORE :

- JOHN JENSEN (CHAIRPERSON), COMMISSIONER
- TERRY LAVENDER, COMMISSIONER
- MIKE LOWRY, COMMISSIONER
- ALLAN MUNRO, COMMISSIONER
- KATHY LAMBERT, COUNCILMEMBER

ALSO PRESENT :

- KIRSTIN HAUGEN, COMMISSIONER

Preston Community Center  
8625 310th Avenue S.E.  
Issaquah, Washington

6:30 p.m.  
June 21, 2007

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

2 (The public hearing commenced at 6:37 p.m.)

3 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Welcome to the King  
4 County Charter Review Commission Public Hearing in  
5 District 3. Thanks for choosing to come tonight. In  
6 addition to your opportunity to have input in this  
7 process, it's also very encouraging for people on the  
8 Commission to see this kind of turnout on a beautiful  
9 night.

10 My name is John Jensen. I'm a board member  
11 and past president of the Newcastle Chamber of  
12 Commerce. I'm one of twenty-one commissioners on this  
13 Commission.

14 There are three other commissioners here  
15 tonight. On my left is Terry Lavender from the King  
16 County Conservation Futures. On my right is Mr. Allan  
17 Munro. He is from District 8 and distinguished  
18 attorney. And on my far right is Governor Lowry, who  
19 is one of the co-chairs along with Lois North on our  
20 Commission.

21 COMMISSIONER LOWRY: It's good to be on your  
22 far right.

23 (Laughter and Applause)

24 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: I also want to mention  
25 the staff that we have here. Our administrative

1 liaison is Charlotte Ohashi. She's back there. She's  
2 the one you first saw when you checked in. Our charter  
3 review coordinator is Mark Daniel, and the project  
4 manager is Corrie Watterson.

5 Councilwoman Lambert is on her way. She'll  
6 be here shortly.

7 What is the Charter Review Commission? We  
8 are a group of citizens appointed by the King County  
9 Executive to review the county charter. The charter is  
10 essentially the constitution for the county. It  
11 specifies that there be a review at least every ten  
12 years by its citizens.

13 What have we done so far? This is our sixth  
14 of nine public outreach meetings. We have contacted  
15 360 organizations in the county; and we've had  
16 presentations from organizations like the Municipal  
17 League, League of Women Voters, the Suburban Cities  
18 Association, also the united area -- unincorporated  
19 area councils. And we'll be hearing from Kathy Lambert  
20 next week at our regular meeting. She'll be presenting  
21 in front of the entire commission. After our public  
22 outreach period, we will begin deliberating on the  
23 charter issues.

24 This is the list of commissioners. A little  
25 hard to read from where you are, but I think it's in

1 one of the handouts so if you want to look at that  
2 later you'll be able to see it. The commissioners  
3 represent every district, pretty much gender, ethnic.  
4 There's a very diverse group of people on the  
5 commission.

6 At this point I would like to introduce  
7 Corrie Watterson; and she's going to take you through  
8 how our process over the next year, year and a half is  
9 going to go.

10 PROJECT MANAGER WATTERSON: Hi, everybody.  
11 I'm Corrie Watterson. I want to tell you a little bit  
12 about the charter processes as well as what our time  
13 line looks like from here out until November of 2008,  
14 which is when this commission's work officially  
15 concludes. So I'll be reading off the site, and I'm  
16 going to skip ahead a little. If you have a packet,  
17 you'll see where I'm reading from.

18 So first let's talk a little bit about what  
19 our charter is. It's a basic blueprint for our  
20 government, and it acts as a constitution. All the  
21 county's laws and actions have to be consistent with  
22 the charter; but at the same time the charter is  
23 limited by our federal and State of Washington laws, so  
24 they can't conflict.

25 This is the fortieth birthday of the charter,

1 and we just want to note it's been a very successful  
2 document overall and there's not been a lot of changes  
3 to this document of a fundamental nature in the last  
4 forty years.

5 So some things that have been done to the  
6 charter in -- Am I on the wrong page? Sorry.

7 A little bit about what a charter issue is,  
8 the nature of a charter issue. First, Charter-Only  
9 Solution. The issues that we put in the charter should  
10 be best put in the charter rather than through the  
11 administrative action or ordinance. It's a fundamental  
12 thing. It's long term, not specific. It's not about  
13 the salaries or the Executive or something that's going  
14 to change or get outdated quickly. And it's going to  
15 address our core values as people and as county  
16 citizens.

17 Some action in the charter, things we've seen  
18 over the last four years, reducing the size of the  
19 council from thirteen to nine. I'm sure you all  
20 remember that. That was in 2004. Guaranteeing the  
21 freedom of religion and conscience to the citizens;  
22 prohibiting public spending for religious purposes.  
23 That was in 2001. An independent county board of  
24 ethics, that failed in 1997. Limiting campaign  
25 contributions, that was passed in 1981; and updating

1 the covenants on the anti-discrimination provision,  
2 that hasn't gone to ballot but it's been considered a  
3 few times.

4 So you can see how broad the possibilities  
5 are for our charter. Even though you can't touch  
6 things that state and federal law address, there's  
7 still a lot left over for the people.

8 The history of our charter review. May 1969,  
9 Lois North, one of the co-chairs of this current  
10 Commission, created the charter and that was passed by  
11 the people.

12 Not a lot happened in the years intervening  
13 of a fundamental nature until King County merged with  
14 Metro and the council was expanded from nine to  
15 thirteen people in 1992. Then the council was reduced  
16 again, and now the present day we're in our fifth  
17 charter review process.

18 So one of the ways that the charter can be  
19 amended, there's three ways. The first you're looking  
20 at it: the Charter Review Commission, using the input  
21 of citizens, then deliberating, then passing on those  
22 recommendations to the council. The second way, the  
23 council can actually initiate amendments on their own.  
24 Those will go to the people eventually as well for a  
25 vote. And the third way, by citizen initiative. This

1       isn't presently in the charter itself as an  
2       authorization. That was created by a court ruling and  
3       in the last couple years.

4               Actually right now there's an initiative  
5       coming out on the November ballot called Initiative  
6       I-25 -- likely will be on the November ballot -- that  
7       is using this third method citizen initiative to amend  
8       our charter, and that issue proposes to elect the  
9       county elections director.

10              So where are we in this process, and where  
11       are we going? We're in the first phase right now with  
12       meetings with the public. And next the Commission will  
13       deliberate on the issues, and that will last until  
14       February of 2008. After that we are going to come back  
15       out to the public and see what you think of what the  
16       commissioners have recommended.

17              And public comment period in March of 2008;  
18       and finally in May 2008 finalized amendments are sent  
19       to the council where the council has an up or down vote  
20       on the amendments and once they vote up will go to your  
21       ballot for November of 2008.

22              So a couple of things that have already been  
23       raised. This is our sixth public outreach meeting, so  
24       we've been hearing from citizens and from some  
25       organizations as well. Appointed versus elected

1 positions, campaign finance reform, the nature of our  
2 electoral system itself, the initiative process, local  
3 services in unincorporated areas, and partisan versus  
4 nonpartisan positions are some of the hot issues so  
5 far. Again, this is not intended to limit your  
6 testimony. I'm just letting you know what we've heard  
7 so far.

8 So we're about ready to start listening to  
9 your testimony. Just a couple questions to jog your  
10 thinking if you don't already have something prepared.

11 What major regional issues need to be  
12 addressed now and over the next decade? Because the  
13 changes being made now will be in effect for the next  
14 ten years most likely.

15 Number two, how can King County government  
16 simultaneously meet the needs of urban and rural  
17 residents and should its role change?

18 And, three, King County seeks to be an  
19 accountable, efficient, effective and fair government.  
20 Is it living up to these standards?

21 So let me turn it back over to Mr. Jensen,  
22 and he's going to call up the people who have signed up  
23 to speak.

24 What's the time limit, John?

25 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: I think we're going to

1 allow about five minutes. So we've got a couple more  
2 people signing up, but we'll go with that.

3 What I would like to do is hold questions  
4 from the commissioners unless they're clarifying  
5 questions so that we can ensure that everybody gets  
6 their opportunity to speak. But then hopefully, like  
7 in the other meetings so far, we'll be able to have a  
8 dialogue afterward.

9 There's two things I wanted to mention.  
10 Number one, this is being filmed by KCTV and recorded.  
11 And the other is I missed Hong-Nhi Do, Executive --  
12 there she is -- the Executive Office intern.

13 I think right before we get start with our  
14 public comment, if I don't just jump on Kathy right as  
15 you walk in the door, --

16 PROJECT MANAGER WATTERSON: So we will hear  
17 from Councilmember Lambert and then hear testimony?

18 If you are not prepared to speak tonight for  
19 whatever reason, feel free to fill out a comment card  
20 up on the table or you can reach us by our website, our  
21 e-mail address or you can call Mark Yango.

22 And thanks. We look forward to hearing from  
23 you.

24 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Councilmember Lambert, I  
25 invite you to come up to the table, please.

1           Councilmember Lambert, like I said, will be  
2     presenting before the entire commission next Tuesday;  
3     but I would like to give her an opportunity to say  
4     hello and welcome to the meeting.

5           COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: Thank you very much.  
6     What a pleasure to be here, and I want you to know that  
7     you hold the record. I think that we have more  
8     citizens here at this meeting than at any of the other  
9     ones. So give yourselves a round of applause.

10           (Applause)

11           COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: I'm really proud of  
12     you coming tonight because there are many things that  
13     need to be changed in our charter; and I sat down and  
14     looked through the charter from cover to cover one day  
15     just to see what did I think. If I were to sit down  
16     and rewrite this charter, what would I change? And  
17     there were 44 things that I would change if I had the  
18     power to do that all at once; and for each of those 44  
19     changes, there was an incident that happened that in my  
20     mind was not good government. And so I want to make  
21     sure that we look at what's happening in the county and  
22     what can we do to change our charter so we stay on a  
23     course that we as citizens feel is a representation of  
24     us as a people and that this is our government and we  
25     have control over what we can expect. And as the

1 charter is currently written, I don't really feel  
2 that's what we have.

3 So I will be speaking next week before all of  
4 you illustrious members and giving you all 44 of the  
5 different ideas. And not that I expect that they're  
6 all going to be changed, but it gives a flavor of what  
7 needs to be done differently in King County.

8 And I feel that there's a lot of division in  
9 King County. We have decided that there are certain  
10 land use patterns; and we've agreed to those land use  
11 patterns, that there's urban and there's suburban and  
12 there's rural. And what has not happened in my mind is  
13 that there's been a respect for what each of those  
14 three divisions brings to the entire county.

15 One of the things that drives me over the  
16 edge is when we talk about the rural subsidy. Because  
17 we're rural, they say that we can't have any shopping  
18 centers and so our taxing dollars are spent in urban  
19 areas and they give us no credit for the fact that we  
20 spend money. I think all of you go spend money. You  
21 buy all kinds of items. And they should from the  
22 demographics be able to figure out what our income  
23 level is and therefore what are we going to be spending  
24 in taxable dollars and give that as a credit back to us  
25 to make sure that we get that much credit in the amount

1 that we're putting in our own tax dollars. And instead  
2 they're saying they subsidize us \$40 million a year and  
3 therefore they have the right to do certain things.  
4 And I think that that is something we need to stop.

5 So those are the kinds of things that are in  
6 here; and I'm excited about sharing the specifics,  
7 which I'm sure I'll need to have some NoDoz so I keep  
8 you awake. But they're important to make sure we're  
9 staying the course. So that's why we took the time to  
10 look through the charter and do that.

11 I'm really excited you're here. I think it's  
12 important for the commissioners to know that we are a  
13 rural area, an unincorporated area and that we expect  
14 top government. We're proud of the regional services  
15 King County provides, and I would say King County does  
16 a very good job of providing rural services. But that  
17 is not their primary function. Their primary function  
18 is to provide local services, and I would not give a  
19 good grade on the local service provision because we  
20 get what's left over. So we're doing a very good job  
21 of feeding the masses, but we're letting our own  
22 children starve and that's not the way things should be  
23 run.

24 Do I have one more minute?

25 CITIZEN: Would you please explain, because

1 I've heard it for years, why they think they're  
2 subsidizing us? In what way? Can you give us some of  
3 the details on that?

4 COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: Just what I was  
5 saying.

6 CITIZEN: I've never been able to understand  
7 that.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: They can look at Bell  
9 Square, say, for instance. A lot of tax dollars spent  
10 in Bellevue Square. And so that money is allocated out  
11 that that's how much came in from Bellevue. Now, we  
12 know that everybody that's shopping in Bellevue Square  
13 is not from Bellevue. I'm not from Bellevue and I, my  
14 husband will tell you, shop there too often. So the  
15 issue is that Bellevue gets the credit for being the  
16 enterprise that generates that kind of tax dollars.

17 Out here we don't have Bellevue Square, and  
18 so we don't have a place where we can generate that  
19 because the land use does not allow us to have the  
20 capacity for us to buy cars or whatever in the quantity  
21 that you can in other cities. So we don't get the  
22 credit for generating those kind of tax dollars. And  
23 so they say that we didn't bring as much in; therefore,  
24 they're subsidizing us.

25 CITIZEN: But we're paying more taxes total

1 per residence.

2 COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: Probably. Yeah. So  
3 that's why that is not a good argument and the kind of  
4 thing that I think needs to be changed.

5 So anyways, it's very exciting to be here;  
6 and I'm thankful that we have you here. I thank you  
7 for all the preparation I know you have put into doing  
8 this. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Well, the focus of this  
10 meeting is hearing from you, so we are going to get  
11 right to that.

12 One thing, another commissioner did come in.  
13 Kirstin Haugen, from Mercury Consulting, is in the back  
14 of the room.

15 If you could just raise your hand, Kirstin.

16 That way after the meeting you can find one  
17 of us to talk to.

18 I'm going to run through these. We've got  
19 two or three maybes.

20 Mr. and Mrs. Robinson? Would you like to  
21 speak?

22 Mrs. Robinson, you will be right after --

23 GARY ROBINSON: Well, there may only be one  
24 of us that speaks.

25 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Can you go to the

1 microphone, Mr. Robinson? Thank you.

2 GARY ROBINSON: Ours is more of a question of  
3 I guess authority in terms of what we would like to  
4 propose as a charter amendment. We have a King County  
5 Library System, 82 million bucks a year to run it, \$174  
6 million in bonds for the construction. That library  
7 system is overseen by a five member board of trustees,  
8 appointed by the county executive and confirmed by the  
9 county council. That is the end of the county's  
10 oversight of what happens with the King County Library  
11 System. The board of trustees has no oversight.

12 It is established it's an RCW organization,  
13 and the only people that it's responsible to are all  
14 the patrons of King County. So the only oversight that  
15 we can provide is by going to the monthly meetings, the  
16 board of trustees meetings, and making our comments  
17 known there and we have and we've had some success with  
18 that.

19 Our concern of course is that the library  
20 system is not operating consistent with what the  
21 patrons would like to see. We have no way or have very  
22 little way of influencing that, so what we would like  
23 to both suggest and also to ask is given that this is  
24 an RCW organization and a rural library system we would  
25 like to propose that King County become -- the King

1 County Council become the oversight for that system so  
2 in effect the board of trustees reports to the council.  
3 That then provides a multitude of ways by which patrons  
4 can make their feelings felt with respect to how the  
5 system is being run.

6 So it's a common-ended question: Can we  
7 propose a charter amendment like that given the RCW  
8 status of the organization? Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thanks, Mr. Robinson.

10 Mr. Nelson -- Edwin Nelson?

11 And after Mr. Nelson will be Mr. Goodspace  
12 Guy.

13 EDWIN NELSON: I'm Edwin Nelson. I live near  
14 Fall City. Establishing a rural affairs department  
15 would probably be a good idea. I would suggest  
16 building places in Monroe, North Bend and Enumclaw to  
17 address rural issues of people that live on the eastern  
18 part of King County, addressing the rural issues.

19 This is kind of left over from the proposed  
20 transfer of Fall City Park to Snoqualmie Tribe. I  
21 noticed that the Olive Taylor Quigley Park in downtown  
22 Fall City was also part of this transfer, and I think  
23 that should be stricken off the transfer to the tribe.  
24 This is in downtown Fall City, south of the Snoqualmie  
25 River.

1 I notice the Fall City Library has been torn  
2 down. It was a substantial building, and I was  
3 surprised they would tear it down. They're going to  
4 rebuild it at taxpayer cost. Is that necessary?

5 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Nelson.

6 GOODSPACE GUY NELSON: My name is Goodspace  
7 Guy Nelson, so we have at least two Nelsons in this  
8 room. And I'm one of the candidates for the King  
9 County Council, and I'm unhappy with the election  
10 procedure that I have to go through. The district  
11 system is rather confusing, so instead of having  
12 election to the King County Council by district I would  
13 much rather have election at large.

14 For example, as confusion, I just got a  
15 telephone call from a person about two hours ago that  
16 told me I'm listed as running for the 2nd District as a  
17 Republican on the King County site, but I'm running as  
18 a Democrat in the 8th District and I'm running against  
19 a person I don't want to run against. So the district  
20 system forces me, if I want to be a candidate, to run  
21 against Dow Constantine, which I don't want to do.

22 I like the idea of positive campaigns,  
23 instead of negative campaigns. I want candidates to be  
24 able to say, "This is what I'm for; this is what I want  
25 to build; this is how we can improve the living

1 standard; this is how we can improve the quality of  
2 life," instead of going to the negative campaigning,  
3 tearing people down.

4 And so I think running at large would bring a  
5 much more positive atmosphere into the elections than  
6 running against a person by being confined it to a  
7 small district that is a small portion of the county.

8 Also -- Let's see, what is it that I want to  
9 say?

10 By running at large -- I don't mean that we  
11 should copy the City of Seattle because in the City of  
12 Seattle they have positions, so they're not really  
13 running at large. Although it's said they're running  
14 at large in the City of Seattle, they're really running  
15 against people. They're not running for the city as a  
16 whole. So I want us to run at large, not for  
17 positions.

18 Now, a second point, there's a lot of people  
19 in our society who are nonpartisan. There's a group  
20 that are partisan, Republicans, and partisan Democrats;  
21 and then there's a large group who are not partisan.  
22 And seems to me the power should be in the people, in  
23 the individual and it should flow from the individual  
24 to whoever they elect. And so having partisan races in  
25 King County sort of excludes or diminishes the power of

1 nonpartisan people.

2           So I think people will be more empowered if  
3 we conduct all of our races as nonpartisan races even  
4 though they may be partisan races elsewhere. And so  
5 this will make it much easier for all citizens who are  
6 interested in good government to put themselves out as  
7 candidates.

8           For example, many of the races under the  
9 current systems have no candidates. We already know  
10 who is going to win. For example, in the 2nd District  
11 we know who is going to win and we haven't even had the  
12 primary. There is no challenger in the primary. In  
13 the 4th District there is no challenger in the primary.  
14 I'm one -- I don't know if there's any other challenger  
15 in the primary. I may be the only challenger in the  
16 primary election for the King County Council. I  
17 haven't checked to see if there's another one or not.  
18 And that doesn't seem democratic to have elections  
19 where there's only one candidate. What kind of  
20 democracy is that?

21           Now, on another point, a lot of people say,  
22 "I have to vote for the lesser of two evils; I can't  
23 vote for who I want because who I want is not going to  
24 win. If I vote for who I want, I'll be throwing my  
25 vote away."

1           So I favor that we go to choice voting,  
2 preference voting, instant runoff voting, where the  
3 voter can indicate, "This is my first choice; I know  
4 this person is not going to win; he's a member of the  
5 Greek party; he has no chance of winning, but that's my  
6 first choice." Or another person says, "My first  
7 choice is this libertarian. I know this libertarian is  
8 not going to win, but that's my first choice."

9           And so people don't vote for their first  
10 choice under the current system. They vote for the  
11 lesser of the two evils, the big spender who they know  
12 is going to win or has a chance of winning.

13           So I think preference voting, choice voting,  
14 instant runoff voting, I'm not sure of the details.  
15 I'll leave the details to the experts. So I think I've  
16 talked enough.

17           CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Nelson.

18           The next two speakers will be Ken Konigsmark,  
19 and the next speaker after Mr. Konigsmark will be Alan  
20 Dujenski.

21           And I'll say while he is making his way up  
22 there, if you failed to sign up or something hits you  
23 while you're sitting there and other people are  
24 speaking, you will have an opportunity to come up and  
25 speak.

1           KEN KONIGSMARK: Hi. Ken Konigsmark. I live  
2 right up the hill, 5713 285th Avenue Southeast, out  
3 here by Preston.

4           I want to state up front that I do have some  
5 knowledge of King County affairs, having served on  
6 about every committee that one can serve on that way  
7 from Rural Forest Commission, CAO Advisory Committee,  
8 Smart Growth Advisory Committee and the Citizens Open  
9 Space Committee and more. I've also been involved in  
10 pretty much every rural issue that's been before the  
11 council for the last ten years and on all of the comp  
12 plan and land use issues in many cases too.

13           With that as background, the first  
14 recommendation I would like to see is in the charter  
15 the creation of a rural advisory commission to advise  
16 the council on rural affairs. When it came to issues  
17 like the terrible debate over large churches and  
18 schools being sited in the rural area, there was no  
19 advisory body that could consider the issue, provide  
20 advice and feedback on impacts and concerns; and I  
21 ended up doing this on my own time and creating sort of  
22 my own self-advisory committee on that, on rural  
23 wineries, on many other issues that have come before  
24 the council.

25           The unincorporated area affairs councils do

1 not meet the need. They're narrow in focus and  
2 geographic region and narrow on the issues that they  
3 review and provide feedback on. The same is true of  
4 the Ag Commission and Rural Forest Commission. Very  
5 narrow in the focus of what they deal on.

6 Yet there are many issues on the rural policy  
7 that come before the council and they do need the input  
8 of a broad range of rural citizens from all of the  
9 rural area of King County, and it would make eminent  
10 sense to have a rural advisory commission populated by  
11 people from throughout the rural area.

12 The second issue -- Kathy's got 44; I could  
13 go on all night too. But I'll limit it.

14 This one has been a pet peeve of mine for a  
15 while. I don't know how and where or if it fits in the  
16 charter, but the whole concept that King County Parks  
17 must become a revenue-generating operation is an  
18 affront to the management of proper parks and open  
19 space in this county. It puts pressure on the Parks  
20 Department, who is starved for cash, to sell off our  
21 public assets, whether it's signage in parks or  
22 concessions or whatever it may be; and that's not the  
23 reason we've invested the money to buy the open space  
24 and to create the parks. And I would like to see the  
25 charter clearly state that a fundamental goal of the

1 county is to provide unfettered open space for the  
2 citizens of this county, unaffected by the need to  
3 create revenue to keep it open and to also provide  
4 enough maintenance fund to keep the parks running.

5 So the third issue -- and I could go on all  
6 night on that one -- again, I've been involved in lots  
7 of land use issues and it drives me crazy to see the  
8 council freely give upzones to private property owners,  
9 increasing their zoning, making them instant  
10 millionaires, when in fact we also have an existing  
11 transfer of development rights program in this county  
12 where we should be making those private owners buy the  
13 density credits that they intend to use to realize that  
14 so many increased.

15 We created a transfer of development rights  
16 program, but we're crippling it by giving free upzones  
17 to owners. Fine, if there are areas where added  
18 density is desired and necessary with proper growth  
19 management, let's do that; but make it only realizable  
20 for the private owner if they buy those density credits  
21 out of the TDR. Then we can strengthen both of those  
22 programs.

23 Similarly, I'm more green than anything; but  
24 I'll also say the council should not downzone  
25 properties without compensating the landowners as well.

1 And if you are going to take away the density, then you  
2 should give those landowners a fair value as well.

3 And finally, on property tax structure, I do  
4 think rural parcels are overly taxed compared to what  
5 the services provided are; and the example I throw out  
6 immediately is a critical areas ordinance. And I was  
7 on the committee. I spoke against the whole idea that  
8 a landowner, if applying for a permit, would lose the  
9 rights to use 65 percent of their property and be told  
10 they can't use it when you apply for a permit. And yet  
11 there's no compensation and no tax reduction.

12 My suggestion at the time was if the intent  
13 of the CAO is to create better salmon habitat and  
14 protect what habitat we have left, which is primarily  
15 in the rural area and that burden is borne by rural  
16 residents, then give them the corresponding tax  
17 reduction for keeping that property in open space. And  
18 the same would hold true in the forest zone.

19 So to keep the county from going broke, shift  
20 that equal corresponding value of tax assessment and  
21 spread it across all urban parcels, which would be  
22 pennies on the parcel; and that way all of the  
23 population of Puget Sound is buying into the concept of  
24 saving the remaining habitat, protecting what we have  
25 left for salmon and not putting the burden solely on

1 the handful of rural property owners who are imposed  
2 upon by this policy.

3 And it would seem to be more fair, it would  
4 seem to level the burden of tax across all the citizens  
5 who have had impacts to salmon and to Puget Sound and  
6 it's a much fairer approach. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you very much.

8 Alan Dujenski.

9 ALAN DUJENSKI: My name is Alan Dujenski and  
10 I'm from Woodinville and I don't have anything profound  
11 as a lot of the previous speakers had to say; but I had  
12 one observation I just wanted to pass on to the  
13 Commission in that my wife and I and the neighbors  
14 would sit out on the porch at night and discuss the  
15 politics and sit there and complain and have our cup of  
16 coffee and maybe a cigar and this has gone on for years  
17 and finally we decided we needed to do more, we needed  
18 to get involved and we've started to try to understand  
19 what's happening down in Olympia and what's happening  
20 in King County.

21 Now, to be honest, we have had a lot of  
22 disparaging remarks about King County Council: "What  
23 are those people thinking down there?" And "Why are  
24 they coming up with this?" Well, recently I had a  
25 chance to try to read through the charter. And people

1 are always talking about erosion of rights; and what I  
2 see in this charter -- and I could be wrong -- but I  
3 see an erosion of representation. I hate to see the  
4 King County sign change from when they had the little  
5 castle because when I read through the charter that  
6 represented to me that we had a king and a parliament  
7 and not true representation of the people there. And I  
8 think that we need to go take a look at what changes  
9 need to be made to where the councilmembers can have a  
10 little bit more representation than just the Executive  
11 himself.

12           And one other issue, just to touch -- How  
13 does this happen to all of us? It's sort of like that  
14 story of the frog in the water? You've all heard the  
15 thing, where if you take a frog, throw him in boiling  
16 water, he jumps out. If you take and put him in  
17 lukewarm water and start heating it up slowly, what  
18 happens is the frog gets cooked. And that's what's  
19 happening to us it seems, is that we're getting cooked  
20 slowly as we let our rights -- no, not rights -- our  
21 representation be eroded; and I think that we need to  
22 all get involved. My wife and I have been negligent in  
23 not taking part, and we're trying to make up for that.

24           And in regards to an earlier comment about  
25 the property being -- Well, 50 percent of my property

1 is King County I guess you would say. I called them up  
2 last week and said the fields were getting a little  
3 tall and I wish they would come out and cut them.

4 And honestly, I really would like to see the  
5 changes in the charter that give the representatives a  
6 little bit more control than the way it's set up.

7 Thank you.

8 (Applause)

9 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Dujenski.  
10 Mr. Nixon.

11 And after Mr. Nixon is Peter, is it, Lamana?

12 TOBY NIXON: Good afternoon -- or I guess  
13 it's evening now. Representative Lambert, Members of  
14 the Commission, I appreciate this opportunity to  
15 address you tonight.

16 I'm Toby Nixon, former State representative  
17 for the 45th District and former ranking member on the  
18 State Government Operations and Accountability  
19 Committee in the State House. And in that capacity I  
20 did a lot of work on reforming our election laws after  
21 the 2004 issues that we had.

22 I'm sure you all remember that over the last  
23 few years King County has had a number of challenges in  
24 the administration of elections. And after a few of  
25 those incidents, the Executive appointed a panel of

1 experts -- the Elections Task Force -- and the council  
2 appointed a panel of experts -- the Citizens Elections  
3 Oversight Committee -- and both of those panels of  
4 highly qualified experts made a number of  
5 recommendations as to changes that could be made to  
6 improve the administration of elections in King County.

7 One of those recommendations that they both  
8 made but that has not yet been implemented is that the  
9 county should have a separate department of elections  
10 and that department should be headed up by an elected  
11 nonpartisan director of elections. A few of us have  
12 gotten together and are working toward implementing  
13 that recommendation by initiative. It was mentioned  
14 earlier tonight, Initiative 25. And so to make it easy  
15 for you, the language has already been written for this  
16 charter amendment. It would be very easy to refer to  
17 the language of Initiative 25.

18 In the, I won't be so bold as to say,  
19 unlikely event the initiative doesn't pass, I would  
20 hope that you would still look at that language and  
21 perhaps, if necessary, make some refinements and  
22 consider including it in your recommendations for  
23 charter amendments to be put to the people.

24 I would like to add a comment. Mr. Goodspace  
25 Guy and I don't -- or Goodspace Guy Nelson and I don't

1 agree on a lot of things, but one of the things we  
2 apparently do agree on is on the question of ranked  
3 choice voting or instant runoff voting. I've been a  
4 proponent of that election method for a long time and  
5 in fact sponsored legislation in Olympia to allow such  
6 elections both on the local level and the State level.

7           And I note that Pierce County, when they went  
8 through their charter review process recently, put such  
9 an amendment to their voters and it passed last year.  
10 And so once again, the language to enable county  
11 offices to be elected using instant runoff voting has  
12 already been written and it's something you could  
13 easily refer to in that Pierce County charter  
14 amendment. The legal research has already been done to  
15 show that it is allowed under state law if we wanted to  
16 have that in King County.

17           I agree that I think that that would open up  
18 the marketplace of ideas and enable more diversity to  
19 come into our election processes, to enable more voices  
20 to be heard and for the voters to express what their  
21 true first preference is without the fear of throwing  
22 away their vote on someone that is perhaps at that  
23 point not likely to be elected but if enough people  
24 were able to express their preference for some of those  
25 ideas that those ideas might emerge and be successful

1 in the future.

2 Thank you very much.

3 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Nixon.

4 (Applause)

5 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Peter, how do you say  
6 your last name?

7 PETER LAMANA: Lamana.

8 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Lamana, thank you.

9 PETER LAMANA: Good evening. My name is  
10 Peter Lamana from Woodinville.

11 Kathy, help me out here. Refresh my memory.  
12 How much of the property in King County percentage-wise  
13 is owned by government?

14 COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: 72 percent is open  
15 space.

16 PETER LAMANA: Okay. And how much is under  
17 the control of King County Government?

18 COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: It's less than that  
19 because there's federal lands and State lands. I don't  
20 have that off the top of my head.

21 PETER LAMANA: Okay. I've seen over the  
22 years the King County Government involved in a lot of  
23 real estate transactions, some of these very large  
24 numbers. I would like to see an amendment where maybe  
25 at a specific level that these real estate transactions

1 go to either a special, a general election vote of the  
2 county residents. Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you.

4 Dave Schneider, are you interested in  
5 speaking? You have a question mark.

6 (No response)

7 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Is there anybody else  
8 interested in speaking? Anybody heard something that  
9 made them --

10 Please, come up, sir. Please state your  
11 name.

12 RICK RANSOM: Rick Ransom. I'm kind of a  
13 long time resident of the valley. My great grandfather  
14 homesteaded out here, so we've only been here for 130  
15 years or so. So we have a little bit of knowledge. We  
16 have a small farm left from the original homestead.  
17 But what we found is over the course of time the  
18 ability to live there has been taken away; and it's  
19 very unfortunate because even during the last flood,  
20 all the knowledge that was passed on to me about living  
21 there and the height of the water and stuff, my parents  
22 were right. They hit it within a few inches. So I  
23 would say that there's a little tribal knowledge that  
24 we might have. But it would be nice if we didn't have  
25 to give up everything in my case that we've lived

1 lifetimes for, just to be able to protect me from the  
2 next terrible waters.

3 So I would like to at least be FEMA's  
4 representative on the council as a small farmer in Fall  
5 City.

6 CITIZEN: Could you give us an example of  
7 what impediment you're experiencing?

8 RICK RANSOM: Oh, you mean when you can't  
9 rebuild the buildings that you have on your property?

10 CITIZEN: Yeah.

11 RICK RANSOM: Is that clear enough?

12 CITIZEN: Thank you.

13 RICK RANSOM: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you, Rick.

15 SHERRY THOMPSON RANSOM: May I add to that  
16 just a second?

17 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Yes, come up.

18 SHERRY THOMPSON RANSOM: I'm the wife. I  
19 have more to say -- I'm not the original farmer.

20 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Please come up and state  
21 your name.

22 SHERRY THOMPSON RANSOM: I am Sherry Thompson  
23 Ransom, and the question that was asked is if the  
24 property is actually right on the Snoqualmie River.

25 FEMA has changed its rules, and we have nobody to go to

1 that we've been able to find in King County that will  
2 help us at least try to sift through all of the rules  
3 that have changed.

4 Like Rick said, the property has been in the  
5 family for generations. Finally, finally after three  
6 weeks working with King County through Sims's office we  
7 have -- we've established our address on Lake Southeast  
8 -- West Snoqualmie River Road Southeast; and the thing  
9 that they finally -- the lady that I was working with  
10 had finally bought into, that that was the true  
11 property, that was part of the homestead that Rick grew  
12 up on and the family homesteaded, is that there's a tin  
13 that says: Guernsey Cattle, The Burnbank Farm, The  
14 Ransoms. And this huge walnut tree has grown into the  
15 tin, and you can't see the whole name. But I sent her  
16 a 4 meg file of the picture of the tin and pictures of  
17 where our property is that's left to us, which is 7  
18 acres, looking at the original home -- the original  
19 farmhouse where he grew up to convince them that it's  
20 important to us to be able to even have that address.

21 But we keep getting told no every way we go.  
22 We've been working with lots of different people to get  
23 permits just to move dirt around, for instance, on the  
24 property. FEMA is supposed to be protecting us from a  
25 flood; but last year in November was the worst flood

1 that we've had in a long, long time and where we had  
2 the dirt mounded up where we want to build the house it  
3 did not get wet. We left our tractor; we left things  
4 under tarps and nothing got washed away. But yet we're  
5 told, "No, you can't do it."

6 And so anybody here or anyone of you guys  
7 could give us some direction as to who we could talk to  
8 to try to break the dam loose so we could come back  
9 there and establish the roots. Right now we're farming  
10 there as much as we can, but we can't live there. And  
11 we would like to do that. So thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you, Mrs. Ransom.

13 Is there anyone else who would like to speak?

14 Please.

15 MELODY SCHERTING: Hi. My name is Melody  
16 Scherting; and I'm a resident of the City of Issaquah,  
17 recently annexed out of King County happily and into  
18 Issaquah.

19 I hear my fellow neighbors here in Fall City,  
20 their concerns with the local portion of King County  
21 Government. I have been under that rule, have endured  
22 it, borne it, and am happily liberated from that at  
23 this point. It is as night to day.

24 My request for the charter is for residents  
25 who use King County as a local government that there be

1     some special representation for them because King  
2     County seems on many levels to work as regional  
3     government but they fail miserably as a local  
4     government.

5             Case in point, I think it's absolutely  
6     criminal that King County Parks is thinking of  
7     transferring a local park in their own definition, the  
8     only local park that these residents here can use for  
9     baseball, soccer to a sovereign nation. It to me is no  
10    different than handing it over the City of Paris or to  
11    the Nation of Spain.

12            So I would request that those types of  
13    transfer of parks be done with public comment, public  
14    notice and public vote only. Thank you.

15            CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you, Melody.

16            (Applause)

17            CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Is there anybody else  
18    that would like to speak?

19            I don't see any hands, but what I would tell  
20    you is --

21            Oh, Mr. Munro.

22            COMMISSIONER MUNRO: I had a question because  
23    I had trouble understanding the Ransoms. Was your  
24    house destroyed in a flood?

25            RICK RANSOM: Never.

1 SHERRY THOMPSON RANSOM: Never.

2 COMMISSIONER MUNRO: What specifically is  
3 prohibiting you from living on the land that you've  
4 been farming?

5 RICK RANSOM: There's two issues.

6 CITIZEN: Microphone.

7 COMMISSIONER MUNRO: Yes, the mike.

8 RICK RANSOM: The thing is this is -- the  
9 buildings that are still on the existing property are  
10 in not the best of repair at this point because we  
11 weren't able to reside there. However, it was good  
12 enough for my forefathers, it was good enough for all  
13 the people that worked on our farms; but right now  
14 they're close to the road, they need to be rebuilt or  
15 just removed and replaced. But those buildings were  
16 the homes of many people. During the depression we had  
17 many, many people living on our farm; and that's where  
18 they stayed.

19 The original house that I grew up in was  
20 across the street and was sold when mom and dad sold  
21 the property so they could retire.

22 However, the buildings in that area, it  
23 really doesn't lend itself to today's way of living,  
24 let's put it that way. So it's just our goal is to be  
25 able to rebuild in that location at a level which will

1 keep us free of the water. And we know where that is.  
2 That's all we ask. But we do not have that choice.

3 And it's homesteading property, but we  
4 watched what was given to us by the federal government;  
5 and what our rights are now, it's something else. I  
6 have water rights. I have parchments dating way back  
7 into the 1800s. So --

8 COMMISSIONER LOWRY: And so you can't get a  
9 building permit because of FEMA? The county says FEMA  
10 won't allow them or --

11 RICK RANSOM: Yeah. They said, well, you  
12 have to get an effluent permit and then you have to do  
13 this. But the first answer was I would like to -- when  
14 I asked them, I said, "We just want to rebuild the  
15 buildings, build new buildings and replace them. This  
16 is the land; this is where we've been at; this is where  
17 they are." "No." The answer was no.

18 COMMISSIONER LOWRY: And pardon me. I'm sure  
19 you just said this. And so thereby the building  
20 permits to be able to do that, you can't get that  
21 because of the FEMA regulations that the county has to  
22 comply with. It's that coordination.

23 RICK RANSOM: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER LOWRY: Asking the question.

25 RICK RANSOM: And it just keeps going. You

1 can't here, so go there; and sooner or later you just  
2 -- You keep working on it. By the time I die maybe  
3 I'll be able to be buried there.

4 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Councilmember Lambert.

5 COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: Thank you. I want to  
6 answer that point.

7 First thing is that the county just applied  
8 for the upgraded FEMA rating. We have the highest FEMA  
9 rating of any county in the entire United States which  
10 moved the discount for citizens from 30 percent to 40  
11 percent on their flood insurance. If we had not done  
12 that, that rating requires certain things that is so  
13 high this gentleman is having the problems he's having.

14 FEMA will not allow any expansion in a flood  
15 plain. It's even so bad that if your barn burned down  
16 you could not replace it at all because you can only  
17 replace in a flood plain 50 percent of your previous  
18 assessed value. So if you have a 100 year old barn  
19 that is now worth 2,000 or 3,000 of the assessed value,  
20 where many of the barns were assessed at nothing  
21 because they're so old, so you can build half of  
22 nothing. And that's where the problems begin to start,  
23 and it gets worse from there.

24 RICK RANSOM: Yeah.

25 COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: And because of where

1 it is now in the floodplain and with these extra higher  
2 FEMA ratings, the setbacks from the rivers are so much  
3 that you can't build sometimes for 300 feet back.

4 So he has a FEMA problem, he has setback  
5 problems and he has the AB problems. And that's on a  
6 good day.

7 RICK RANSOM: That's on a good day. My great  
8 grandfather was the first judge in this area. We go  
9 back forever. All the things that were given to us  
10 that we worked through, we did the time on the land.  
11 Now nothing. Except for tax money. We get that.

12 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Ransom.

13 I would like to open it up to the  
14 commissioners to ask questions of the speakers if they  
15 have any.

16 Terry, have you got any?

17 COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: Not prepared.

18 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Not prepared.

19 Anybody prepared at this point? If not, I  
20 will kick it off with one to Mr. Nixon.

21 Last night we were in West Seattle and we had  
22 people talking about the sheriff's position and being  
23 elected or appointed. And that was an elected position  
24 created by initiative in 1996 or 1997. And one of the  
25 thoughts is you mentioned that if the I-25 were to

1 fail, the charter agreement, look at it still. As an  
2 appointed commissioner, is that an appropriate thing  
3 for us to do? And why?

4 TOBY NIXON: Well, thank you for the  
5 opportunity to respond. So it probably would not make  
6 sense for the Charter Review Commission to put the same  
7 exact language back before the voters if they had  
8 already voted it down once, and I would agree with  
9 that. But if it turned out that there was some  
10 adjustments to it -- I mean, there's a lot of different  
11 ways to configure this.

12 The proposal in Initiative 25 is to have a  
13 separate department of elections headed by a  
14 nonpartisan director of elections. Alternatively you  
15 could have a proposal that was the same as every other  
16 county has, which is to have a county auditor, which is  
17 again an elected position that has responsibility not  
18 only for elections but also for finances and records  
19 and licensing and other things.

20 Our proposal Initiative 25 is based  
21 specifically on the recommendations of the panels of  
22 experts that the county asked for their opinion. But  
23 there are like I said alternative ways of doing it that  
24 if the Charter Review Commission believed that the  
25 voters still had a strong desire for the additional

1       accountability that would come from having that be an  
2       elected position but that the proposal needed to be  
3       slightly different it would make sense to go back with  
4       an alternative proposal later.

5               CHAIRPERSON JENSEN:  So you are saying this  
6       is a well written initiative.

7               TOBY NIXON:  We think it is.  It very  
8       specifically addresses the issues that have occurred  
9       over the last few years.

10              CHAIRPERSON JENSEN:  The reason I'm asking  
11       about is one of the things I'm learning with the  
12       current sheriff's position is that some people feel it  
13       should go back the other way.  At the same time there  
14       are others who feel that we just need to have -- if the  
15       initiative had been better written, the sheriff would  
16       be on better footing.  So there's a concern in the  
17       initiative process that the bar is too low to get on  
18       there.

19              TOBY NIXON:  Well, I'd say that's an  
20       interesting perspective.  I tend to trust the voters a  
21       bit more, and I think that a 10 percent requirement for  
22       signatures to get on the ballot with an initiative is  
23       pretty high.  That's considerably higher than what the  
24       requirement is at the State level, for example.  So I  
25       don't see the initiative process in King County as easy

1 by any respect.

2 To get an initiative on the ballot in King  
3 County right now requires 54,732 valid signatures.  
4 Now, for Initiative 25 we've collected almost 75,000.  
5 So that's about 31 (phonetic) percent of the voters who  
6 voted in the last county Executive race. So I think  
7 there's a lot of support for the proposal based on  
8 that.

9 Let me say this about the sheriff. I think  
10 one of the main reasons that the people of King County  
11 decided they wanted to have an elected sheriff is so  
12 that the sheriff could be an independent voice for the  
13 resources that are needed to protect our lives and our  
14 property.

15 When the sheriff is appointed and the  
16 sheriff's budget is just rolled up into the Executive's  
17 budget, the sheriff cannot speak out as an independent  
18 voice on behalf of the people for the resources needed  
19 to ensure that our lives and our property are  
20 protected.

21 Likewise, I think that that's something that  
22 the people in every other County of Washington have  
23 with regard to elections the people in King County  
24 don't have today.

25 Every other county has an elected auditor.

1 That elected auditor can speak out if they think that  
2 their county commissioner or their county council is  
3 underfunding the elections process, not providing the  
4 staff or the equipment or resources needed to properly  
5 administer an election. That auditor can go directly  
6 to the people through the media or otherwise and raise  
7 public awareness of that fact that's being underfunded.

8 We can't do that in King County today because  
9 the election's function is seven levels deep in the  
10 county bureaucracy; and not only can they not say  
11 anything contrary to the Executive in the budget  
12 process, they can't even go to Olympia and testify on  
13 pending election legislation that would have a serious  
14 impact in King County without the Executive's  
15 permission. So I think having an independent voice is  
16 very important.

17 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you very much.

18 Terry?

19 COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: One of the issues  
20 that we have heard frequently is that as a local  
21 government King County doesn't provide adequate  
22 services; and so if you look at this issue as to how  
23 you might solve that, there's sort of a whole range of  
24 things. There could be a formal township where the  
25 rural areas actually elect their own people and it

1 operates almost like a city council. There could be  
2 the unincorporated area councils be strengthened and  
3 cover more areas. There could be a rural advisory  
4 commission. There are a lot of different options.

5 It could be something as easy as keeping the  
6 government that we have but making sure that those who  
7 represent rural areas have more staff and more money in  
8 their budget to take care of --

9 (Applause and Laughter)

10 COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: I mean, a lot of  
11 issues you talk about are constituent issues, things  
12 that you want service from your government; and the  
13 nine county council people divide everything up  
14 equally, whether they're primarily a local government  
15 provider or not.

16 So there's a full range of ways you might  
17 look at trying to address this question, and so I'm  
18 interested in your thoughts as to where you think the  
19 appropriate solutions are or how you see them.

20 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: The gentleman in the  
21 back.

22 COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: To the microphone.

23 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Unfortunately you do  
24 have to come up to the microphone, please.

25 MATT LARSON: Good evening. I'm Matt Larson,

1 the mayor of Snoqualmie. And I didn't come here  
2 tonight with any specific ideas to speak, other than to  
3 listen; but I guess I wanted to respond to what you  
4 just said about townships or some sort of  
5 representation of those county areas for local  
6 representation.

7 Kathy does a remarkable job being responsive  
8 out here to the rural areas; and every time I have a  
9 concern and raise it to her, she is responsive and so  
10 is her staff. However, there's a number of times where  
11 there's been issues of conflict or relative to maybe  
12 Fall City and the Mayor Ken Hearing, who is back there  
13 too, sits with me. We have the Snoqualmie City  
14 Government Association. The Cities of Duvall and  
15 Carnation are within Snoqualmie. But I don't know how  
16 Ken feels, but I feel that Fall City's voice is sort of  
17 left out of that and Kathy often tries to attend those  
18 SVGA meetings, but she can't immerse herself in the  
19 details of Fall City given the size of her district and  
20 all she has to travel. And so I just want to share the  
21 perspective that I would as a mayor in the valley here  
22 fully welcome -- and often Kathy shared with me that  
23 there's been merchants at Fall City that sometimes  
24 meet. That's not an appropriate representative body of  
25 that city down there. And this is a city similar to

1     Carnation and others that should have a voice, whether  
2     it's on our SVGA group or -- that could immerse  
3     themselves in more details, be in conversation with  
4     local mayors and councilmembers and convey that advice  
5     or that perspective to their representative of the  
6     county council such as Kathy and others.

7             And so I just wanted to respond to that and  
8     say I would value that, something in the charter that  
9     gave up a mechanism. And I've heard some Fall City  
10    residents express that same sentiment that, "Hey, we  
11    should have a bigger voice" or that they could  
12    formulate a voice in representation.

13            COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: Could I just --

14            A lot of the rural residents don't live in an  
15    area that's even as much of a town as Fall City is.

16            MATT LARSON: Sure.

17            COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: So do you see -- when  
18    you're describing this township, are you talking about  
19    the Fall City organization; or are you talking about  
20    the whole rural area?

21            MATT LARSON: Well, since I'm being friendly  
22    to Fall City -- because it is like many people say  
23    there is the City of Fall City but most people it  
24    doesn't even occur to them that Fall City is different  
25    than, say, Carnation or Snoqualmie or North Bend; and

1 it doesn't have a council or mayor and dealing with  
2 issues there often Ron Sims is kind of the mayor of  
3 Fall City along with the rural areas and for the  
4 obvious reasons Ron Sims would not be as available as  
5 the mayor -- as other mayors in the valley.

6 But I guess it certainly wouldn't be adverse  
7 to having a voice. I don't know where you call --  
8 There's no city limit to Fall City, so it spills all  
9 the way up into Lake Alice and other areas around the  
10 valley.

11 Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thanks, Mr. Larson.

13 Please, come up.

14 SUSAN MILLER: Thanks. My name is Susan  
15 Miller. I consider myself a Fall City resident. I'm  
16 really an unincorporated resident. It's truly a no  
17 man's land. I've been here three years, and it's been  
18 a fascinating experience to move from Seattle to here.  
19 I never knew my elected officials in Seattle, even  
20 though I was a public employee all my life. I'm  
21 retired. I now would say that I almost know Kathy on a  
22 first name basis. She's seen me in enough meetings.

23 I'm very involved in the FCCA, Fall City  
24 Community Association, and the first -- What county  
25 departments impact us the most. The first I

1 experienced as an FCCA member was transportation,  
2 although that's always aligned with the State often;  
3 and I was fairly impressed with the clarity and  
4 anticipatory information provided about our roundabout  
5 that's coming early on. High marks for that.

6 I have been moved to action over the  
7 horrendous way King County handled the parks issue. I  
8 think -- Always trying to control myself when I repeat  
9 this; but the Parks director who could have come to our  
10 FCCA meeting early on and said, "Master plan has us  
11 doing this; the impact on your local park is this;  
12 let's have it written up; let's have it distributed;  
13 let's invite input; we all want you to know it's coming  
14 down," never happened. It to us appeared to be a  
15 behind-closed-door issue; and so thinking -- trying to  
16 think proactively as a good ex-public employee how do  
17 you fix these problems, it's about how can you put into  
18 job descriptions or just requirements of all department  
19 heads that they always bend over backwards to  
20 communicate with the public? They did a horrible job  
21 with this.

22 And one of my greatest sadnesses about this  
23 is that it has predisposed the local population to not  
24 think positively about the tribe. And when I heard --  
25 the first time I laid eyes on Matt Matson was at the

1 meeting that Kathy called because she was no frustrated  
2 that she couldn't get anything out of the Parks  
3 director, she forced his hand, she forced him to come  
4 to that meeting. I thought Matt Matson presented  
5 himself credibly, professionally, concerned, we've got  
6 twice as much manpower going into this park as the  
7 county; but people were so angry that unfortunately I  
8 think it was directed at Matt Matson.

9           And I'm very sad that if we have tarnished  
10 the reputation of the tribe before they've even started  
11 it's to a large degree because of our King County Parks  
12 director. And that's a travesty that could so easily  
13 have been avoided if there had been early public  
14 communication.

15           So thinking what is the fix for this, it's  
16 the FCCA is very active and it's growing. I mean, I  
17 bet there are forty people that go to those meetings  
18 every month and it's local people like me who are  
19 retired and ready to be active and involved wherever  
20 they can.

21           And I think you've got to ensure that the  
22 Parks -- not just Parks but any department that impacts  
23 at a local level has got to make an appearance  
24 regularly at whatever group level organizes itself. I  
25 hope that's a constructive -- frustration, but it's a

1 suggestion.

2 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you, Susan. Thank  
3 you for all the constructive comments.

4 Sir.

5 JIM DAVIE: My name is Jim Davie. I'm just  
6 going to follow up with Susan's comments a little bit  
7 and respond to the request for services issue that was  
8 brought up.

9 I think in my own mind I would make a  
10 distinction between request for services and just a  
11 general understanding of the differences between the  
12 majority of the population within the county and the  
13 rural county members.

14 I think that the comment about the county  
15 leaning over backwards to listen to the rural county  
16 members is extremely important, and I would make that  
17 distinction because our lives are very different now.  
18 In my personal case, that's not quite true. I've been  
19 around enough at the meetings. I'm a professional and  
20 work in the City of Seattle, but I think that that's  
21 maybe an important distinction for the council to make.  
22 Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Davie.

24 Please, sir.

25 KEN HEARING: Good evening. I'm Ken Hearing,

1 mayor of North Bend. I live in North Bend, and I would  
2 like to echo what the fellow mayor said about the  
3 representation of the rural area.

4 I would like to focus a little bit different.  
5 I believe less than 20 percent of the population in  
6 King County live in unincorporated, so they're  
7 substantially underrepresented by only -- for the most  
8 part two of our councilmembers.

9 Prior to the reduction in the number of  
10 councilmembers, I think that the ratio was about  
11 120,000 to one. It's now 160,000.

12 193,000. Kathy Lambert is representing  
13 193,000, and I don't know what the number is in  
14 unincorporated. But it's a lot of people. We are  
15 really underrepresented in that respect.

16 People living in North Bend, people living in  
17 the unincorporated area around North Bend quite often  
18 call me for help as their mayor. They don't recognize  
19 that I'm not really their mayor, but I do try to help  
20 them. But it is a sign that there's a big need out  
21 there for some sort of additional representation of  
22 some sort.

23 I don't know what the answer is, but --

24 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Mr. Munro.

25 COMMISSIONER MUNRO: Well, what was

1 originally built into this charter back forty years  
2 ago, if I understand correctly, was that the  
3 unincorporated areas would be represented by  
4 unincorporated area councils. Now I'm shown a map that  
5 was presented to us in one of the earlier hearings and  
6 I see that very large areas of the county do not have  
7 organized unincorporated area councils. They do not  
8 seem to be working. And I'm hearing from some of the  
9 council persons, present company excepted, that they  
10 would prefer not to go to those meetings.

11 For one thing, the council's downsized;  
12 they're complaining that they need to go to 130  
13 meetings a month and they can't get any real work done  
14 while they're sitting there. But I'm also getting the  
15 vibes from them that they're not hearing anything from  
16 these people that helps.

17 So I'm hearing from you folks that the areas  
18 that need local services are not getting it and are  
19 maybe being overcharged for it, but I'm also seeing  
20 that nobody is organizing to get their voice going when  
21 there is something already in the charter that would  
22 permit that.

23 What is the answer? What are we not doing  
24 that we could do?

25 KEN HEARING: I don't know. I'm not certain

1 what the answer is, but there must be some way to  
2 motivate people to volunteer for the situations because  
3 that's what it's going to take.

4 It's interesting that I've heard comments  
5 about the partisan, nonpartisan race, trying to get  
6 people to come out and compete. Why don't people  
7 volunteer to run for offices?

8 In the upper valley we have I believe it's  
9 eight or nine positions open between North Bend and  
10 Snoqualmie, and none of them were contested. Is it  
11 apathy or just content? It might be a combination of  
12 both.

13 UNIDENTIFIED: We're just doing that good of  
14 a job, Ken.

15 KEN HEARING: But I don't know. How do we  
16 motivate people, period? Most of the time people do  
17 not come out to volunteer for things unless they're  
18 unhappy about something and then they can see there's a  
19 way they can make a difference, to help. Other than  
20 that, I don't know how to motivate them.

21 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you, Ken.

22 Councilmember Lambert --

23 Go ahead, Governor Lowry.

24 COMMISSIONER LOWRY: Mr. Mayor and Mr.

25 Hearing, thank you. You're almost volunteers for --

1 (Laughter)

2 KEN HEARING: I'm more of a volunteer than --

3 (Laughter)

4 KEN HEARING: I get paid less.

5 COMMISSIONER LOWRY: One of the problems  
6 we're all grappling with is the need for services in  
7 the unincorporated area and what's the revenue base pay  
8 for those needed services; and cities have some  
9 revenues available an unincorporated area does not  
10 have, not that you have enough. But I'm not saying  
11 that.

12 But I just always have trouble -- and I'm  
13 just asking this question -- figuring out how we get --  
14 See, I think it's elected representatives that get this  
15 responsiveness to the citizenry, whether that's city  
16 councils or county councils or whatever it is.

17 And so I don't know what the feelings are  
18 about annexations so that -- and on both the cities and  
19 the unincorporated areas and what the feelings are on  
20 annexations, which would change a little bit that  
21 dynamic. It certainly would have directly elected  
22 representation within the cities, and there would be a  
23 potential of revenue bases because utility tax and a  
24 couple things that aren't available in the  
25 unincorporated. You know all of this better than I do

1 because you face it.

2 So can we be making some major changes in  
3 annexation, or is that just an idea that doesn't work?

4 KEN HEARING: Annexations work as long as the  
5 cost/benefit ratio is there. If it's going to be a  
6 drain on the city services, the city won't do it.

7 COMMISSIONER LOWRY: Right.

8 KEN HEARING: North Bend is actively pursuing  
9 some annexation, but we've got some other issues to  
10 deal with that take precedence.

11 I'm sorry. You said something earlier that I  
12 was going to make a comment about. I forgot what it  
13 was. I think you've hit on part of it.

14 It was mentioned earlier by I think Mr. Nixon  
15 that the --

16 Oh, it was by Councilmember Lambert. That  
17 the services, the cost/benefit of the services to the  
18 unincorporated areas is a drain on the county. There  
19 was a movement a couple years ago to secede from the  
20 county and the county said, "No, we can't let you go;  
21 you couldn't afford to be on your own." That just  
22 didn't make any sense to me. So just --

23 I didn't mean to make a joke of that.

24 COMMISSIONER LOWRY: No.

25 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Councilmember Lambert?

1           COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: Thank you. Well,  
2     Governor, I've had an opportunity to make my  
3     frustration made, and I tried to think of an answer to  
4     that question. I have five.

5           First of all, I think the reason that people  
6     don't get involved more is because they're busy, number  
7     one. And number two, they e-mail and write, so I feel  
8     like I know what the issues are because I get lots of  
9     e-mails. My staff will verify that. And people talk  
10    to me all the time. But I'm one and Reagan Dunn is two  
11    and there's two rural and seven of nine.

12           So no matter what we take to the council,  
13    we're really at a disadvantage every single time; and  
14    that is very difficult because we ask for things and  
15    the other seven say, "Well, you're taking away from us  
16    and we're not willing to do that."

17           One of the ways that this would help is if  
18    the DBS -- which really their main focus is on us. And  
19    so if DBS worked for Reagan and me, then they would be  
20    reporting to me and to Reagan and there would be some  
21    more direct representation, where now they don't really  
22    care what we say because they know the Executive and  
23    ignore us totally. So I think where DBS is, because  
24    that's the main agency that provides services down  
25    here, that whole unit should be restructured.

1           And the other thing is that the Boundary  
2 Review Board has already decided where the cities are  
3 and where the proposed annexation areas are. If we  
4 were to tell the Boundary Review Board that we want you  
5 and we're going to change our RCW to allow you to put  
6 everything in an unincorporated area in a PAA area and  
7 then change the RCW that says the county may delegate  
8 their land use laws to somebody -- they may delegate  
9 the function of doing land use but say for instance the  
10 county could say to Mayor Larson, "Everybody in your  
11 PAA area -- "

12           COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: Kathy, I'm sorry.  
13 What's a PAA?

14           COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: Proposed annexation  
15 area.

16           COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: Thank you.

17           COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: That's the area right  
18 outside the existing city that the Boundary Review  
19 Board has already blessed that someday Mayor Larson and  
20 his team could annex to Snoqualmie. And Mayor Larson  
21 has said in the past he would be willing to do the land  
22 use for those potential annexation areas around him so  
23 that at some point when they were annexed into his city  
24 they would be in compliance with the codes they wanted,  
25 it looks like the rest of the city and the people are

1 used to working together. But under current law we can  
2 say if you do that function you must use the King  
3 County laws. So it doesn't do him any good if half of  
4 his city is being ruled by Snoqualmie laws and PAA is  
5 by King County. There's no point in doing the  
6 delegation. If that would change, I think we would  
7 have a huge improvement.

8 So I think that those are some of the ways  
9 that we could get around this.

10 Fall City has a Fall City Community  
11 Association Vanessa Allen is the president of and  
12 elected to, and Preston Association has Guy Bennett.  
13 So whenever I have questions, that's who I call my  
14 mayors and call them up.

15 Maybe we could strengthen those two  
16 associations because, you're right, some of the areas  
17 have just a special group that is like one function,  
18 where in Snoqualmie Valley Association, Fall City  
19 Community Association and Preston Association, they're  
20 actually the homeowners right in that area and they  
21 deal with everything.

22 So those are some of my suggestions.

23 COMMISSIONER MUNRO: I would like to know  
24 whether --

25 I don't mean to distract people from what you

1 suggested and I know you are going to be speaking to us  
2 very soon, but I would like to know whether if we stuck  
3 our neck out and asked that the county council be  
4 expanded back to thirteen members would there be  
5 sentiment for it in terms of increased rural  
6 representation?

7 I feel that that kind of happened because --  
8 the shrinking of it down from thirteen to nine --  
9 because it was a spinoff from a labor dispute that went  
10 beyond the scope of what it should have.

11 But if I'm off all alone on that, when the  
12 public has just recently voted to shrink the county  
13 council from thirteen down to nine, then I'll let it  
14 die here.

15 COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: May I?

16 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Please.

17 COUNCILMEMBER LAMBERT: The problem with that  
18 is even if you went back we would go from getting the  
19 privilege of representing 193,000 people down to  
20 120,000 people. But then when the boundaries are drawn  
21 again, the same thing would happen, that there would  
22 only be at max three representatives or maybe even  
23 four; but three is what it was before that were rural.  
24 And then we would still have ten that were urban.

25 So we're still at such a disadvantage that

1 every day I feel like David and Goliath. I need to be  
2 Goliath for a while instead of just David and be able  
3 to have some more powers, and I think having the rural  
4 people have some of the departments report to them so  
5 that they had to deal with pleasing us would make a  
6 huge difference.

7 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Mr. Nelson.

8 GOODSPACE GUY NELSON: Goodspace Guy Nelson.

9 I think we draw our leaders from the elected officials;  
10 and with thirteen members on the King County Council,  
11 there would be more people with experience to draw  
12 State leadership from them. So I really like the idea  
13 of going back to thirteen councilmembers; but I like  
14 the idea of them being at large, where if it's easier  
15 to run for office the offices without positions would  
16 go to those who get the highest number of votes.

17 And often you don't know who your friends  
18 are. So if you're out in the county and you say "This  
19 is our need," you might be surprised which members of  
20 those thirteen members or whatever the experts think is  
21 the best number -- I think it should be more than nine  
22 -- you may be surprised suddenly a friend sticks up and  
23 says, "Yes, I agrees with you; that's a good issue out  
24 in the rural area and I'm going to be your spokesman  
25 for that."

1           CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Mr. Nelson, if you went  
2 to an at large system, wouldn't that possibly leave  
3 people in the rural areas heavily underutilized by the  
4 candidates when they're not looking for votes?

5           GOODSPACE GUY NELSON: Well, that's a good  
6 point. But when you have a positive system where  
7 you're not running against people, where you're running  
8 to raise the living standard, the quality of life,  
9 basically our living standard and our quality of life  
10 rests on the principles of economics and the principles  
11 of economics are nonpartisan. So if you have people of  
12 goodwill who don't have to tear down their opponent,  
13 who have studied economics, these people who generally  
14 use the principle of economics as a base for raising  
15 the living standard; and I think the principles of  
16 economics work out in the rural areas as in the city.  
17 But I suspect you would be surprised who your friends  
18 are.

19           CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you.

20           Are there any other comments from the  
21 Commission or --

22           Please, sir.

23           KEN KONIGSMARK: Ken Konigsmark. I like your  
24 suggestion. I would like to see the council expanded;  
25 but I think the key distinction would be the charter

1 does need to clearly describe that, say, 50 percent of  
2 all districts must include rural areas of the county to  
3 address what Kathy is getting at, that we don't need  
4 more urban councilmen. What we do need is districts  
5 that include urban and rural so there's a  
6 responsibility and ownership of at least half the  
7 council having some constituencies in the rural area  
8 they're responsible for. And I think the charter could  
9 do this.

10 COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: Ken, could I ask you  
11 a question?

12 KEN KONIGSMARK: Sure.

13 COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: I'm trying to imagine  
14 how you draw that map.

15 KEN KONIGSMARK: Long skinny pieces.

16 COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: One person, one vote  
17 and so that's what you're proposing is a long stripe.

18 KEN KONIGSMARK: You would have to make it  
19 long and skinny; but from urban to rural, across --  
20 Ideally, in my mind, it would be urban, rural and  
21 forest zone in each district so that there's that  
22 responsibility for all of those functions in the  
23 county.

24 COMMISSIONER LAVENDER: Okay.

25 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Mr. Nixon.

1           TOBY NIXON: So remember the fact that King  
2 County has greater population than like eleven states,  
3 all right? Take a look at those states. How many  
4 members do they have in their state legislatures? I  
5 don't think King County would be disserved to have as  
6 many as forty county councilmembers. You look at some  
7 of the big cities that have populations the size of  
8 King County. They have county councils of that size.

9           So think big. I think that if you really  
10 wanted to have -- the actual expense of operating a  
11 county council compared to the overall county budget is  
12 not that much, just like the cost of operating the  
13 state legislature compared to the overall state budget  
14 is not very much. And if you could improve  
15 representation by greatly expanding the size of the  
16 council and having much smaller districts, that would  
17 be another thing to consider.

18           CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Is there anybody else?

19           I see a hand in the back. Please come up to  
20 the microphone.

21           CITIZEN: Yes, I would like to respond to  
22 Terry's question. She mentioned the township model. I  
23 think that's something the Commission should definitely  
24 look into as a possibility for helping to provide local  
25 services to the rural area. Thank you.

1           CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you.

2           Anybody else? We're getting close to the end  
3 of time, but if there's anybody else with a comment or  
4 something they would like to say.

5           Do any of the commissioners have anymore  
6 questions for the audience?

7           Mr. Nelson, please.

8           EDWIN NELSON: I'm not sure if this is  
9 appropriate for the charter, but it might be. I see a  
10 lot of unemployed people, whether permanently  
11 unemployed, around King County, perhaps best  
12 represented by the homeless; but there's also a lot of  
13 unemployed people living at home or supported by some  
14 other means who would be willing to work. And we have  
15 the highest state minimum wage in the nation among the  
16 states, \$7.93 an hour. So these people with problems,  
17 whether they be very old or amputees or mentally  
18 retarded or ugly or bald, these people with problems,  
19 they have difficulty getting work at the minimum wage.  
20 So I like the idea of the county leading the way and  
21 establishing a new category of employment called  
22 helpers, and under this program -- where the county has  
23 the obligation of hiring helpers who apply for work at  
24 the minimum wage and thus the county gives support to  
25 the minimum wage saying we are not going to be happy

1 when our county cannot work because we're going to be  
2 the back-up employer and we're going to use these  
3 people to open our libraries more, to make our police  
4 more powerful by allowing our expensive police that we  
5 can't afford have people to supervise to make us a  
6 safer environment in our county. And I want these  
7 helpers working in all areas of government according to  
8 their ability. And so an amendment in the charter  
9 saying that the county will be the back-up employer  
10 could lead the way for other governments to also become  
11 back-up employers.

12 CHAIRPERSON JENSEN: Thank you, Mr. Nelson.

13 I would like to thank everybody for coming,  
14 including our commissioners and Councilmember Lambert.  
15 It is just really wonderful for us to have a turnout  
16 for this, to have it open like this. In fact, I think  
17 together we probably match everything we've seen so  
18 far. So we appreciate your encouragement. Thank you.

19 (Applause)

20 (Meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.)

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I, Jill L. Cheeseman, Registered Professional 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 25th day of June 2007.

L. CHEESEMAN

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Notary Public in and for the State of Washington, residing at Mill Creek. Commission expires August 18, 2007.