



City of Tacoma

Charter Review Committee Minutes

March 7, 2024

5:30 p.m.

747 Market Street, Tacoma WA 98402, Conference Room 243

Dial: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 915 2560 1849

Webinar Link: <https://www.zoom.us/j/91525601849>

Call to Order

Chair Wamback called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: 10 – Katie Baird, Nicholas Carr, Patrick Fischer, Jason Gauthier, Melissa Malott, Latasha Palmer, Andrea Reay, Rebecca Stith, Stephen Wamback, and Lok Yin Wu

Absent: 5 – Maricres Castro, Silong Chhun (excused), Bryan Flint (excused), Andre Jimenez (excused), and Diamatris Winston (excused)

Committee Member Castro joined virtually at 5:32 p.m. and arrived in person at 5:50 p.m.

Committee Members Mallott and Palmer participated virtually.

Approval of Minutes

There were no comments or discussion from Committee Members on the minutes from the February 12, and February 15, 2024, meetings. The meeting minutes were approved.

Committee Member Castro arrived here, at 5:32 p.m.

Public Comment

There was no Public Comment.

Miscellaneous Subcommittee Report

Disposition of City Owned Property

At approximately 5:36 p.m., Committee Member Gauthier started his presentation on the topic of disposition of city owned property in Section 9.1. Gauthier presented the current language in the Charter and the proposed Subcommittee amendment which includes striking the words “shall never” and replacing it with “may”. Another proposed change is the addition of “to public

agencies for the purposes of public access, use and benefit, and” in the same paragraph after the word “state law” and before the work “shall not lease.”

As part of the presentation Gauthier invited guest, Joe Brady from Metro Parks Tacoma (MPT) to help with questions relating to the topic. Brady gave a quick historical background on how MPT works with the City in managing properties.

Discussion ensued on the meaning of disposition and how it’s used in the context of this conversation, understanding the difference between ownership versus MPT maintaining properties, MPT’s versus the community’s definition of “public good”, exclusion of waterfront property, city policy for surplus property, clarification on whether these waterfront properties are categorized as surplus or not, concerns on public benefit, access, and guards against unintended consequences.

MOTION: Gauthier moved to table the subject and return it the Subcommittee for further action.

SECONDED BY: Reay

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted by unanimous consent.

Citizenship and Employment Eligibility

At approximately 6:04 p.m., Committee Member Stith presented on citizenship and employment eligibility in Charter Section 6.3. Stith presented the current language in the Charter and the Subcommittee’s proposed amendment which is the elimination of Section 6.3 entirely.

Discussion ensued on gender neutral language update, RCW 35.18 on citizenship and employment language, contradiction between the Charter and State law, prior ballot measures on striking Section 6.3, Human Resources Department’s suggestion to separate citizenship and residency requirements if this issue is brought to the voters again, citizenship requirements and current classified City employee requirements, employment requirements for the City Manager, benefits of seeking a labor pool outside the City, and Civil Service Board residency requirement evaluation.

MOTION: Reay moved to remove Charter Section 6.3 entirely.

SECONDED BY: Gauthier

Prior to taking the vote an additional question was brought up to the Committee on the possibility of adding language that would give Tacoma residences preferential status when it comes to seeking employment with the City.

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted by unanimous consent.

Administrative Subcommittee Report

Official Newspaper

At approximately 6:32 p.m., Committee Member Carr presented on Charter Sections 2.13, 6.14, and 7.11 which refers to the official newspaper of the City of Tacoma. The Subcommittee's proposed amendment is to replace the current language to "on the official website and preferred digital media".

Discussion ensued on clarifying what digital media encompasses, RCW 35.22.288 that governs State law on the topic, equal public access to City notifications, language that is too prescriptive, and the addition of the word "print" as generations still access information via printed sources.

MOTION: Carr moved to forward as proposed subject to further refinement by staff.

SECONDED BY: Stith

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted by unanimous consent.

Break

The meeting recessed at 6:46 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:02 p.m.

Administrative Subcommittee Report (continued)

Planning Commission and Landmarks Preservation Commission

At approximately 7:02 p.m., Carr continued his presentation on behalf of the Administrative Subcommittee on diversifying and expanding the Planning Commission to include additional expertise and eliminate the prohibition on pay, which is in Section 3.8. Amendments proposed are to increase the membership from 9 to 11, and that the additional members be housing and health community experts.

Discussion ensued on a possible seat for the business community on the commission, commissions and boards compensation, and reduction of specific requirements to serve on the Planning Commission to increase flexibility and make membership less restrictive.

MOTION: Gauthier moved to table the recommendation and return it to the Subcommittee for further discussion.

SECONDED BY: Baird

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted by unanimous consent.

Planning Commission and Landmarks Preservation Commission

At approximately 7:20 p.m., Carr presented the on the topic of the Landmarks Preservation Commission and the Subcommittee’s proposed amendment is to be more consistent with the Planning Commission language around District representation and professional experience representation and removing the current prohibition on pay.

Discussion ensued on proposed language change from “Tacoma Municipal Code” to “ordinance”, the difference between not inconsistent and consistent, other references to the Tacoma Municipal Code, board membership, and residency requirement.

MOTION: Gauthier moved to forward the amended language to staff for legal review and drafting.

SECONDED BY: Carr

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted by majority consent with Wamback voting against.

Subcommittee

At approximately 7:30 p.m., Chair Wamback opened the floor for Subcommittee reporting updates. Baird gave a brief report on Public Utilities topics which includes internet, expanding board membership, performance review, board compensation, and “purpose of inquiry” language. Carr from Administration Subcommittee touched on “purpose of inquiry” language. Palmer and Reay shared that the Power of the People Subcommittee doesn’t have any recommendations ready for sharing, but the Subcommittee will be meeting on Saturday, March 9th to further discuss their topics. Malott mentioned a draft report the Power of the People Subcommittee are working on and circulating among its members. Form of Government Subcommittee scheduled their first meeting on Saturday, Marth 9th. Palmer gave an update from Public Outreach Subcommittee on neighborhood outreach and requested for other Subcommittees to send her a short description of their work to be included in the presentation slide deck she’s working on.

At approximately 7:38 p.m., Chair Wamback raised the issue of when the Form of Government Subcommittee was created it was absent the strongest opposing view. Discussion ensued on the reasoning behind changing the Subcommittee membership.

MOTION: Gauthier moved to change the membership of the Form of Government Subcommittee from Baird to Reay.

SECONDED BY: Carr

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted by majority consent with Palmer abstaining.

Staff Update

No update from staff.

Other Business and Homework

At approximately 7:52 p.m., Chair Wamback then moved on to discussing ideas on how to proceed when Committee Members are absent from the meetings. Comments and suggestions were shared, and the Committee discussed a more detailed and structured agenda with the intent to highlight items that require action would be a step to the right direction.

Chair then moved on to the topic of the Committee's tentative presentation to City Council during Study Session on Tuesday, April 2, 2024, at 12:00 p.m. All interested members are welcome to attend.

Chair then mentioned his recent TV Tacoma interview.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:04 p.m.



Stephen Wamback, Chair



Joan Taverna, City Clerk's Office