



City of Tacoma

Charter Review Committee Minutes

April 1, 2024

5:30 p.m.

747 Market Street, Tacoma WA 98402, Conference Room 220A

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: 13 – Katie Baird, Nicholas Carr, Maricres Castro, Patrick Fischer, Bryan Flint, Jason Gauthier, Andre Jimenez, Melissa Malott, Latasha Palmer, Andrea Reay, Rebecca Stith, Stephen Wamback, and Lok Yin Wu

Absent: 2 – Silong Chhun and Diamatris Winston

Committee Member Winston arrived at 5:49 p.m.

All Committee Members participated virtually.

Welcome

At approximately 5:32 p.m., Chair Wamback began the meeting by outlining the agenda for tonight's meeting and reminded the Committee of the meeting guidelines they all agreed to adhere by.

Approval of Minutes

There were no questions or corrections from Committee Members on the minutes from the March 14, 2024, meeting. The minutes were approved.

Public Comment

Public Comment began at 5:35 p.m.

Speaking before the Committee:

1. Annette Agee, spoke on Neighborhood Councils, making sure the Committee keep citizens of Tacoma in mind when making their recommendations and considerations, and

the original intention for the creation of Neighborhood Councils.

2. Cathie Urwin, spoke on Neighborhood Councils, residents not being heard, people within the Charter Review Committee not being heard, Neighborhood Councils pre-pandemic, and residents feeling discouragement.
3. Stacy Oaks, spoke on Palmer's opening comments during the previous meeting, residents not feeling heard, and expanding the Neighborhood Councils' role.
4. Heidi Stephens, spoke on overriding voices within the Committee and how this could possibly affect other's decision on how they vote, role of Neighborhood Councils, and possibly expanding its advisory role.

Committee Member Winston arrived here, at 5:49 p.m.

Public Comment ended at 5:49 p.m.

Form of Government Subcommittee

Form of Government

At approximately 5:50 p.m., Malott reintroduced the topic of change in form of government for the Subcommittee. Some highlighted changes in Mayor-Council-Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) form of government the Subcommittee proposed are reduction of City Council Members from nine to seven, Mayor as the executive of the City and not a member of City Council, converting the City Manager position to CAO who is jointly appointed by the Mayor and Council. Malott explained the general content of a video presentation that was on citizens concern on the lack of accountability and transparency.

Discussion ensued on the Subcommittee's proposal, elements of the proposal, concentration of city operational power different from City Manager to CAO structure, clarity on Mayor and Council's role in appointing and terminating CAO, possibility of this proposal creating a weak executive and legislative branch, form of government that works best for Tacoma now, clarity on the reporting structure, concerns on Council votes required to remove the Mayor, history of professionalism in government, clarity on the appointment to commissions and role of Mayor versus City Council, balancing politics and professionalism as the City's executive and legislative branch of government, the Council's current ability to remove the City Manager, clarity on language with regards to Mayor hiring their own staff, listening to public comment and being responsive to the number one concern received, concern with the current form of government is the lack of accountability, continued Charter work on ensuring Tacoma will have an empowered executive and legislative branch of government, and deadline for comments/suggestions submission to the Subcommittee.

MOTION: Baird moved to return the recommendation back to the Form of Government Subcommittee and for it to return back to the Committee as a Whole next week.

SECONDED BY: Carr

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

Break

The meeting recessed at 7:10 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:21 p.m.

Administrative Subcommittee Report

Climate Commission

At approximately 7:22 p.m., Carr presented for the Administrative Subcommittee on the topic of adding a Climate and Sustainability Commission (CASC) in the Charter. Considering and incorporating the public and the Committee's comments and suggestions, the Subcommittee's new proposal includes language on a carbon budget and net-zero emissions goals, commission membership and appointment criteria, and the elevation and transformation of the existing Sustainable Tacoma Commission. The Subcommittee's goal is to create a commission that could advise, provide oversight, and report to the Council on the City's progress in meeting the goals of the Climate Action Plan (CAP).

Discussion ensued on clarifying the definition of "overburden community", distinction between small business versus business community, clarity on the net zero goal being Citywide or for City government, tracking the City's carbon footprint, rationale for committee size, term limit language in Charter versus ordinance, level of subject matter expertise required in managing climate goals, clarity on intent and messaging, current carbon budget and CAP, public engagement/outreach portion in the CAP, clarity on appointments, and clarity on the use of the word "ensure."

MOTION: Flint moved to refer to staff for review the draft language and the additional list the Subcommittee created, after the Subcommittee provides a further review, to include the items addressed during this presentation.

SECONDED BY: Malott

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

Humane Society

At approximately 8:21 p.m., Carr presented the topic of the Humane Society and the Subcommittee's proposal to eliminate Section 3.10 of the Charter which authorizes a contract with the Humane Society or other similar animal control agencies, from the Charter.

MOTION: Stith moved to advance the recommendation to staff for review and drafting.

SECONDED BY: Flint

Discussion ensued on the rationale for striking Section 3.10 out of the Charter, a private entity named in the Charter gives the appearance of preferential treatment, if there has been any

communication with the Humane Society, and animal control service contracts are not limited to the Humane Society.

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

Other Subcommittee Reports and Discussion

At approximately 8:29 p.m., Chair called for any other topics from the Subcommittees still up for reporting. Palmer requested any suggestions or comments on the Neighborhood Councils proposal be forwarded to her Subcommittee for discussion and consideration. Police Accountability Subcommittee still has the collective bargaining issue to address. Chair Wamback also mentioned the four Tacoma Public Utilities recommendations staff prepared and are ready for final Committee as a Whole discussion and vote. Chair also reminded everyone of the City Council Study Session visit on April 2, 2024, at Noon.

Staff Update

No update from staff.

Other Business and Homework

No other business and homework.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.



Stephen Wamback, Chair



Joan Taverna, City Clerk's Office