



City of Tacoma

Charter Review Committee Minutes

April 4, 2024

5:30 p.m.

747 Market Street, Tacoma WA 98402, Council Chambers

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 5:33 p.m.

Roll Call

Present: 11 – Katie Baird, Nicholas Carr, Maricres Castro, Patrick Fischer, Bryan Flint, Jason Gauthier, Andre Jimenez, Latasha Palmer, Andrea Reay, Stephen Wamback, and Lok Yin Wu

Absent: 4 – Silong Chhun, Melissa Malott (excused), Rebecca Stith (excused) and Diamtris Winston

Committee Member Castro arrived at 6:04 p.m., Committee Member Winston arrived at 6:18 p.m., Committee Member Stith arrived at 6:19 p.m., and Committee Member Malott arrived at 7:07 p.m.

Committee Members Jimenez, Palmer, Stith, and Winston participated virtually.

Welcome

At approximately 5:32 p.m., Chair Wamback began the meeting by outlining the agenda for tonight's meeting and letting the Committee know that Committee Member Chhun resigned due to work commitments.

Approval of Minutes

The Committee asked the City Clerk's Office to revisit the section of the March 18, 2024, meeting minutes on rank-choice voting and confirm if a vote was taken.

Public Comment

Public Comment began at 5:38 p.m.

Speaking before the Committee:

1. Zev Cook, spoke on form of government and police accountability.

2. Sadie Reay, spoke on the amount of time and effort her mom Andrea Reay put into Charter work.
3. Devin, spoke on form of government, full time Council with staff, police accountability with strong relationship with the Community's Police Advisory Committee, and appreciation for the Committee's efforts and recommendations.
4. Heidi Stephens, spoke on the previous discussion on Neighborhood Councils including previous history and support of the addition of the Neighborhood Councils to the Charter.
5. April Smith, spoke on the inclusion of Neighborhood Councils in the Charter.
6. Stacy Oaks, spoke on ranked-choice voting and "may" versus "shall" language.
7. Gemini, spoke on form of government, full time Council with appropriate compensation, reduced public comment time during community forum, getting rid of the City Manager position, climate work, and community impact.
8. Eric Lahti, spoke in support of including Neighborhood Councils in the Charter.
9. Danielle Villegas, spoke in support of empowering and including Neighborhood Councils in the Charter.

Public Comment ended at 6:01 p.m.

Council Presentation Discussion

At approximately 6:02 p.m., Chair Wamback gave a brief overview of the April 2, 2024, visit to the City Council Study Session. Chair and the Committee Members who attended gave an overview of the work the group has done thus far.

Committee Member Castro arrived here, at 6:04 p.m.

Discussion ensued on key take aways from the Council meeting including the request from City Council on some type of prioritization of Committee's recommendations, budget considerations, Council's interest in recommendations that can be suggested now and then implemented in the future, and what items can be done through Charter versus other Council action.

Committee Member Winston arrived here, at 6:18 p.m. followed by Committee Member Stith at 6:19 p.m.

Discussion continued on whether the Committee should prioritize their recommendations as Council suggested, views on the pros and cons of prioritizing, how to best manage the large number of recommendations the Committee currently has, consolidating similar topics together into one recommendation, prior examples/templates Committees have used when prioritizing, risk versus reward in reducing the number of recommendations, historical background on previous recommendations that were brought to Council, the success rate, and best path forward.

Break

The meeting recessed at 6:55 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:07 p.m.

Committee Member Malott arrived here, at 7:07 p.m.

Police Accountability Subcommittee

Collective Bargaining

At approximately 7:07 p.m., Jimenez presented for the Police Accountability Subcommittee, specifically on collective bargaining agreement language. After consulting with legal, the Subcommittee learned the State restricts what can be put in the Charter with regards to labor agreements. With that knowledge, the Subcommittee proposed the collective bargaining agreement language they've drafted be added to the preamble of the Charter or an ancillary item in the Committee's full report.

Discussion ensued on the preamble where the Subcommittee proposed to add the language, clarity on labor negotiation pathways, and if the Subcommittee looked at the language used for the Spokane ombudsman.

Power of the People Subcommittee

Neighborhood Council

At approximately 7:22 p.m., Palmer reintroduced the topic of Neighborhood Councils for the Power of the People Subcommittee. Palmer reiterates the reasons the Subcommittee recommends adding Neighborhood Councils to the Charter such as ensuring adequate representation, proper notifications, and offering independent advice.

Palmer then proceeded with the introduction of guest speaker Andrea Haug, Chair of the Community Council of Tacoma (CCOT). Haug gave an overview of the organization, the work they do, the people they serve, their goal to advocate for the community according to their specific needs, and a space where eight of Tacoma's Neighborhood Councils can come together and collaborate.

Palmer continued and presented the updated language proposed by the Subcommittee with the addition of an Equity Committee within the CCOT.

Discussion ensued on whether it's appropriate to add this topic in the Charter, Subcommittee's process, if CCOT currently has an Equity Committee, changes in Tacoma Municipal Code if Neighborhood Councils are added to the Charter, amount of input from all the Neighborhood Councils, historical background on CCOT, process to lessen the challenges in engaging with Neighborhood Councils, how adding Neighborhood Councils to the Charter would expedite and amplify the work being done, and funding for capacity building.

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

SECONDED BY: Baird

ACTION: Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted by majority consent with Fischer and Flint voting against and Reay abstaining.

Amendment Review

At approximately 8:10 p.m., Chair Wamback explained the Committee's process for tackling staff drafted amendments moving forward.

TPU - Internet

At approximately 8:11 p.m., Martha Lantz, Deputy City Attorney, presented the first staff drafted Committee recommendation on Sections 4.1 and 4.10 of the Charter, which is the addition of internet as a utility and explained the impact.

MOTION: Flint moved to advance the recommendation as written.

SECONDED BY: Baird

Discussion ensued on the necessity for the City to enter the business of internet service provider and if including this in the Charter may give misleading public impression.

ACTION: Roll call vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted by majority consent with Fischer and Reay voting against.

Chair Wamback asked for volunteers to write the rationale statement with Baird, Flint, and Carr agreeing to do so. Fischer and Reay will write the dissenting position.

Staff Update

At approximately 8:25 p.m., Martha Lantz informed the Committee of a public records request the City received with regards to Charter Review. She reminded everyone to make sure records are properly preserved until they receive further instruction as the City is still working with the requestor to clarify the request.

Other Business and Homework

At approximately 8:32 p.m., Chair went over the plan for the next couple of meetings including the format of tackling the recommendations, reminder of upcoming additional Wednesday meetings, and Form of Government Subcommittee presentation.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.



Stephen Wamback, Chair



Joan Taverna, City Clerk's Office

