

April 21, 2021 Charter Review Commission Regular Meeting

NOTE: Kathryn was away; Sharon took minutes.

Call to Order: Chair Kevin Ranker called the meeting to order at 4:03 pm.

Roll Call: Sharon Abreu, David Anderson, Bill Appel, Janet Brownell, Kyle Davies, Paul Dossett, Jane Fuller, Patty Garcia, Tony Ghazel, Richard Grout, Liz Lafferty, Bob O'Connell, Kevin Ranker (Chair), Olivia Roseberry (Vice Chair), Maureen See, Anne Marie Shanks, Tom Starr, David Dehlendorf.

Guests: Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive.

Others Present: Milene Henley, Randy Gaylord, Amy Vira, Rick Hughes, Carl de Boor, Minor Lile, Dan (?), Alexandra Gayek, Michelline Halliday, Nick Knoellinger, Jonathan Welch, phone # (360) 790-7174

Approval of April 14, 2021 meeting **minutes**.

MOVED by Anne Marie Shanks; **SECONDED** by Kyle Davies, to approve the Minutes as presented. No discussion. 16 Ayes, 0 Opposed, 0 Abstained. (**NOTE:** David Dehlendorf arrives late to the meeting so was not present for the vote.) **MOTION PASSED.**

Dave Somers, Snohomish County Executive.

Chair Ranker knew him when he was a Snohomish County Council member. He said Dave is a leader on sustainability and climate action. Dave is serving his 2nd term as County Executive now. Served 3-1/2 terms on Snohomish County Council. He was a fisheries biologist before that. His wife worked at UW Marine Lab in FH in the late 70s - work to characterize the shoreline ecosystems.

Discussion about the role of the County Executive.

Dave gave a description of his role and what departments report to him. Dave talked about:

- the nondiscrimination clause added to the Snohomish County Charter in 2016
- the public advocate position that was created
- the Commission on Human Rights added to the put in Snohomish County Charter in 2016
- the Equity & Inclusion Task Force he established several years ago
- the Office of Social Justice established this past year
- exemptions in the Personnel Section
- reorganization in his depts. done last year
- how he interfaces with the Snohomish County Council

Q&A took place – discussion included:

- Composition of the Human Rights Committee
- Use of veto power
- Climate Change Commission
- Relationship with the County Council
- Public Advocate

- Focus of the Equity and Inclusion Task Force, the Human Rights Commission and the Office of Social Justice
- Budget, Staff, Volunteers

Josh Dugan, Dave's Chief of Staff, was on the zoom meeting and provided a lot of information in the chat.

CRC Budget.

Olivia Roseberry shared the budget on screen:

Discussion:

Chair Ranker explained the CRC's budget situation, including the charge for the county email addresses. The CRC will need help with drafting and research, and can go back to SJCC and request additional funds. Milene Henley put in the chat that she was preparing a budget amendment, and that she doesn't think it will be a problem to get additional funding for the CRC.

Patty Garcia volunteered to help with proofreading/editing. Bill Appel volunteered to do preliminary drafting - delighted to help - it's been his area for 50 years. Dave Anderson said this whole process should be much easier and the county should make sure it provides the CRC with what it needs. Is this happening throughout county government, concerning IT, email charges, etc.? Kevin suggested moving forward and going back to the SJCC if needed.

Committee Report. Operations.

Report from the Operations Committee with Q&A:

Maureen See: 1. All depts. are to be bound by the same rules - elected officials are exempt from the rules because they answer solely to the voters. They put this explanation into the Charter.

Maureen See: 2. Public Records - Depts. that have done a lot of scanning so info can be shared online - desired by the public. Added language to Sect. 10.50 of the Charter. Maureen worked with Amy on this language - important, though it will probably be difficult for the county.

Patty Garcia: 3. Ombudsperson position - After talking with James Wolf, the committee realized the personnel manual contains many guidelines on how personnel can report complaints or wrongdoings. Thus, the committee does not wish to pursue this position at this time. They considered a different kind of role - someone to approach about traversing the county government - could be a volunteer position - would require training.

Jane Fuller commented that this sounds like the public advocate position we heard about from Dave Somers - someone the community can go as a doorway to understanding the county government.

Patty Garcia: The committee interpreted the position as being within the county, for people having problems within county government, but then they changed the focus to county residents and a possible volunteer position.

Open for Public Comment. Chair Ranker opened public comment.

Alexandra Gayek:

- No place where public can ask a question and get an answer during public comment sessions or anywhere else.
- Multiple problems with permitting and decision making by the county - neighbors may not know permit has been granted until building begins at which point it's too late to comment.

Rick Hughes: Exempt employees are under guidelines of the employee handbook; they're just not unionized. Applies to elected official and they're #1 deputy.

Committee Report. Operations – continued after Public Comment period:

Discussion around the need for an ombudsperson within the county government. Kevin said the scope of the position would be for the county to decide but the CRC would decide whether or not the position would exist.

Maureen See: 4. Language reinforcing anti-bullying: Decided to direct it towards boards, commissions and committees. Nothing in the county paperwork outlines anything on behaviors in this area, so this seemed a good use of the added language in the Charter, which was reviewed by James and Amy.

Paul Dossett: 5. Dept. heads vs. Elected Officials salaries: Milene Henley gave him some info. She also feels there's a vast distance between the salaries.

Discussion on the issue of salaries. Chair Ranker said the salary discrepancy doesn't have to remain that way. The CRC has the authority to create a public advocate position, but it could also be made as a recommendation to the SJCC.

New Business.

Bob O'Connell responded to Alexandra Gayek that he wrote a short possible amendment about that at the beginning of this process, where the Charter talks about rules. Chair Ranker said there is a requirement for building permits that a sign has to be posted in a public place for either 30 or 60 days before building starts. The CRC can recommend that there might be different ways to advertise this.

Jane Fuller said the Lopez Island School Board recently committed to getting back to a person who raises a question at a meeting. A board/commission needs to deliberate on a public comment - can't respond at that moment, but can respond later.

April 28 Meeting:

- Chair Ranker suggested the CRC meeting go from 4:00-6:30 on April 28, with a definite end time of 6:30. Public Comment time will remain at 5:50. He suggested that thereafter the CRC meeting twice a week.
- Dave Anderson said he would report on the Governance Committee. Janet Brownell said she won't be able to attend the April 28 meeting, and asked that the Governance Committee present the following week instead. Kevin said he would try to switch the Governance Committee report with another committee report.

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm.

Sharon Abreu
CRC Member

Minutes were approved by consensus at the April 28, 2021 Regular Meeting