

Charter Review Commission (CRC) Regular Meeting Notes
May 19, 2021

1. Call to Order - 4:02pm

2. Roll Call: Tony absent

Members of the Public: Randy Gaylord, Sheriff Krebs, Megan McLean*, Milene Henley, Carl de Boor, Laura Saccio, Deborah (Visitors Bureau), (360) 472-0878, Minor Lile, Michelline Halliday, Amy Vira, Linnea Anderson, Kai Sanburn, Ben Bama, Alexandra Gayek, Anne Whirlidge-Karp, Karen Parker, Kurt Fuller, Davis, (360) 298-5934, Lincoln Bormann, Jonathan Welch, Mike ?

*Megan is our new administrative assistant. She lives on Lopez and has a tourism development background.

3. Approval of Minutes of 5/12/21 & 5/13/21: Minutes adopted.

May 12: Motion by Bob, seconded by Jane – motion carried (unanimous).

May 13: Motion by Jane, seconded by Olivia – motion carried, 1 abstention (Kyle)

4. Follow up to Climate & Environment 5/12 report:

Kevin bumped this to next Wednesday.

5. Shall the Sheriff be elected or appointed?

Motion by Paul, seconded by Bill to keep this position elected:

Kevin is very supportive of this motion – thanked the Sheriff.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously.

6. Committee Report – Process Committee:

Patty shared her screen, Bob presented.

Discussion:

Motion by Bob, seconded by Maureen to adopt the Preamble as presented now.

Discussion, including:

- Kevin: Recommendation is for the land acknowledgment to go before the Preamble in the Charter.
- Jane: That will be discussed in the Justice & Equity presentation tomorrow (5/20).

Vote: Motion carried - 1 opposed (David D)

Discussion around the word “Nature”, its definition and where it might fit in the Charter.

- Kevin: We should have a definition section if we’re going to define this word in the Charter. It could be the only definition. Had this discussion in the legislature – in statute there are several definitions around this subject, so we don’t want to get off track with what’s in the law. Also wants it to be consistent with the National Academy of Sciences and NOAA.

Motion by Bill to table this until we have more info - to allow Megan to do some research on it. Jane seconded.

Discussion:

- Liz: It’s to help us see Nature in its full value.
- Maureen thinks it’s a beautiful definition and should be in there somewhere.
- Tom: A motion to table is not debatable.

Vote: Motion to table carried (unanimous).

Bob continued presenting on the proposed amendments.

Discussion.

Motion by Bob, seconded by Bill to adopt this language re budget, space and technical support for the CRC to do its business in the Charter.

Discussion around adequate funding for future CRC’s.

- Maureen: We are not a department or agency – we are a Commission, and as such the county may not assess us for IT services or publishing hearing notices. It’s a function of the Commission and of the law. It’s well written but we can make it tighter.

Friendly amendment by David D. to include the language Maureen just stated plus “... and legal services provide by the prosecuting attorney.”

- Milene: The Commission isn’t being charged – the county is paying for all of these expenses.... There is a budget and the CRC can ask for more.

More discussion on language.

Kevin: We have a motion on the floor to adopt language as is. Kevin thinks the existing language is good – it says “adequate”.

Discussion.

Bob withdrew the friendly amendment.

Vote: Motion to approve the original language presented today passed – 1 against (Tom), 2 abstentions (Paul & Bill)

Discussion:

- Bob announced that the Process committee will be coming back to the full CRC with a Values Statement.
- Dick requested that all documents be sent out at least a day ahead.
- Bob will try to get the Values Statement out to everyone within one hour after the Process Committee's meeting on Tuesday.
- Jane: We had agreed a few weeks ago that documents would be sent out two days prior to their being presented.

7. Committee Report – Governance Committee on Sustainable Tourism:

Janet presented proposal for Sustainable Tourism.

They looked at a recommendation to move tourism promotion from an external marketing entity to an internal department. The public needs to be made more aware of plans for tourism in the county. Decided this is the responsibility of the SJCC to address – it's a legislative decision and the SJCC is accountable to the voters. They want to make the following three recommendations to the SJCC:

1. Tourism Management Plan - Visitors Bureau has been asking for this from the SJCC since 2014.... They want to reinforce to the SJCC that it take into account feedback from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, not just businesses and tourists. Plan should develop a baseline of data from which metrics can be created.... Impacts on natural resources like fresh water, on infrastructure, how much waste is created. This data is essential to assess impact of any tourism in SJC.... This should inform the SJCC about how to move forward with promotion of tourism.
2. Move tourism promotion into the county – the county needs to be responsible for implementing the Tourism Management Plan, and county needs to develop a plan to move the tourism management into the county government – these could happen simultaneously. The San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau's contract expires in December 2022. SJCC should consider employing staff experienced in tourism when creating this new county department.
3. Use of Lodging Tax Funds – The SJCC should increase these toward seasonal worker housing, which is critical. Also, the SJCC should increase spending of these funds to protect and maintain the existing tourism infrastructure like county parks.

Discussion:

Kevin: In state statute it's defined as the action of delegating the money to the contracts. We *could* create an Office of Sustainable Tourism, OR make this suggestion to the SJCC.

The CRC voted on the three recommendations presented:

1. Motion by Bob, seconded by David D. (?) to adopt the recommendation on a Tourism Management Plan

Vote: Motion carried (unanimous)

2. Motion by Liz, seconded by Bob to adopt the recommendation on moving tourism promotion into the county. Discussion.

Vote: Motion carried - 3 opposed

3. Motion by Olivia, seconded by Patty, on adopting the recommendation on Use of Lodging Tax Funds to increase lodging tax money.

Vote: Motion carried - 2 opposed, 2 abstention

Brief discussion.

8. Review of approved motions – no action taken at this meeting.

9. Open for Public Comment:

Kevin read letter he received from two high school students on SJI: Ayla and Raylee urging the CRC to make changes in favor of taking climate change seriously. Kevin said the letter will be posted.

Alexandra Gayek: Definition of Nature – People often don't recognize that it's a system that supports all of life. Recommended saying:

- “the system” instead of “a system”
- something about life (plants, animals, any living being)
- “... that supports all of life” at the end.

Randy Gaylord: Rights of Nature initiative - 1978 when he attended Utah State University. Bern Shanks was a professor there. Randy took an environmental law class – he still has Christopher Stone's essay on the Rights of Nature was required reading – it was the foundation for Rights of Nature. He also has “Managing the Commons” – master of this tragedy of the commons. Your lawyer has been steeped in this as an environmental lawyer from the very beginning. He's giving us advice with this as his foundation.

Discussion:

- Bob: Randy's advice was so important to us – it's what the law is.
- David D: We should respond to these active students in some way, to give them some encouragement that young people are being listened to.
- Kevin: Following up with them is really important. It would be valuable in this case to send them a note thanking them for their comments. But we have to be consistent in responding to all who have sent us comments.
- Liz: We need to move into really hearing the power of what these students are saying to us, and really hear the urgency in their voices. It's a powerful message coming from them and shouldn't be diminished in any way.
- Jane is reaching out to the Lopez Island K-12 school for kids interested in listening and participating in the town halls as part of their civics opportunity. Do outreach to our constituents about the town halls. Gave voice to Karen Parker's comment in the chat responding to Randy's comment – said it was done behind closed doors.
- Janet posted in the chat that she'll reach out to the Orcas schools.
- Patty: Emphasized we have been listening to the public – to the Process Committee meetings – those comments are really being taken seriously.
- Kevin: Karen Parker makes a good point but that's an additional discussion.

Motion by Dick to adjourn.

Bill: Motion to adjourn is not debatable.

Kevin: Allowing a little flexibility.

Public Comment:

Karen Parker: Requested Randy share the transparency of his thinking on Rights of Nature. She wants the citations and interpretations. Christopher Stone just passed away a few hours ago. The concept of the Office of Climate & Environment is completely synergistic with Sustainable Tourism – look at Switzerland and Costa Rica on conservation and eco-tourism.

10. New Business

ADJOURNMENT – Adjourned at 5:55pm.

Sharon Abreu
CRC Member

Minutes were approved by consensus at the May 25, 2021 Special Meeting