



City of Tacoma City Council Minutes

747 Market Street, Tacoma, WA 98402

Dial: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 894 9617 1192

Webinar Link: www.zoom.us/j/89496171192 Passcode: 896569

May 06, 2024

5:00 PM

SPECIAL MEETING

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Woodards called the special meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: 7 - Bushnell, Diaz, Hines, Rumbaugh, Scott, Walker and Mayor Woodards

Absent: 2 - Daniels and Ushka

Charter Review Committee

Present: 14 - Katie Baird, Nicholas Carr, Maricres Castro, Patrick Fischer, Bryan Flint, Jason Gauthier, Andre Jimenez, Melissa Malott, Latasha Palmer, Andrea Reay, Rebecca Stith, Stephen Wamback, Diamatris Winston, and Lok Yin Wu

Council Member Daniels arrived at 5:06 p.m.

Charter Review Committee Members Andrea Reay, Rebecca Stith, and Diamatris Winston participated virtually.

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Council Member Daniels arrived here, at 5:06 p.m.

COMMUNICATIONS

1. [24-0485](#) Charter Review Committee Final Recommendations
[Steve Wamback, Chair, Charter Review Committee]

At approximately 5:07 p.m., Mayor Woodards provided opening remarks and thanked the Charter Review Committee (CRC) for their work.

Stephen Wamback, CRC Chair, provided additional opening remarks and introduced the members of the Committee. He then presented the CRC final recommendations, including the assignment to complete a comprehensive

review; the process, noting Council and CRC member topics of interest, amplifying voices, internal support, external advisors, and community engagement; influential themes, including accountability, equity, clarity, and transparency; and recommendation topics and voting standards.

Rebecca Stith, CRC Member, provided an overview of the form of government recommendation, including an executive mayor, hiring a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), full-time Council status, hiring independent staff, transition to a seven-member Council, mayoral veto authority, and Council impeachment authority.

Andre Jimenez, CRC Member, provided an overview on policing accountability, including creating an Office of Policing Accountability (OPA) that would have a director that is appointed by, and reports to, the City Council, and a Community Oversight Committee for Policing Accountability to report on the activities and effectiveness of the OPA, and to engage with community and government branches.

Latasha Palmer, CRC Member, provided an overview of recommendations related to the Powers of the People section, including authorizing ranked-choice voting and campaign financing restrictions, updating the amount of time to gather signatures in the referendum process, restrictions on competing proposals in the initiative process, and adding Neighborhood and Community Councils to the Charter.

Diamatris Winston, CRC Member, provided an overview on a proposed Climate Accountability and Sustainability Commission, including creating a carbon budget, membership, and role.

Nicholas Carr, CRC Member, provided an overview on recommendations related to other commissions in the Charter, including the Landmarks Preservation Commission, Planning Commission, and Citizen Commission on Elected Salaries. He then reviewed recommendations related to removing the Humane Society from the Charter, term limits for Mayor and Council Members, removing language regarding “purposes of inquiry” to clarify how Council and Public Utility Board (PUB) Members engage with staff, and adding more clarity on the hiring and removal of the City Attorney.

Andrea Reay, CRC Member, provided an overview on the recommendation of full-time Council, including the authority to hire independent staff and grant explicit authority to investigate the executive branch.

Melissa Malott, CRC Member, provided additional information on added language to empower the Council.

Bryan Flint, CRC Member, provided an overview on recommendations related to Tacoma Public Utilities (TPU), including adding internet as a utility, outside City limit PUB membership, and a ten-year audit of shared services between TPU and general government.

Maricres Castro, CRC Member, provided an overview on striking language regarding citizenship as an eligibility requirement for employment.

Lok Yin Wu, CRC Member, provided an overview on updating language of handicap to disability. She continued by reviewing the recommendation on updating language regarding the official newspaper to include electronic posting.

Wamback provided an overview on the proposed recommendation to change the Charter Review process. He concluded by reviewing the final report structure, including rationales and dissenting positions, a failed proposal, additional considerations, website materials, and appendices.

Discussion ensued regarding collective bargaining agreements (CBA) and other municipalities who have independent policing accountability; making committees, boards, and commissions (CBC) more effective; replacing the Sustainable Tacoma Commission with the Climate Accountability and Sustainability Commission; the long-term protection added to items that are put in the Charter; removing the Humane Society from the Charter; adding language to the Charter to empower a full-time Council and if that impacts outside employment; anti-discrimination language in the Municipal Code and Council's periodic review of the Code; language regarding publishing, including the official newspaper and adding language that allows for future styles of communication to be used; term limits, including why they are different for Mayor and Council positions, current term limits, and mirroring other elected positions; Neighborhood Councils, noting they currently operate independently from City government, and adding them to the Charter as non-profit entities; language in the Charter that conflicts with state law and CBAs; state law regarding purposes of inquiry; disposition of City-owned waterfront property, including the work done with other jurisdictions, and why the amendment failed; adding language in the Charter versus an ordinance regarding the membership of CBCs; outside of City limits representation on PUB; impeachment of the Mayor, noting the difference between a Council Member, recall, and discussion the CRC had; joint hiring of the CAO, including what other municipalities use as a model and providing steadiness during transition; Council representation changes in the proposal; independent staffing, noting using less proscriptive language to allow Council to decide; ranked-choice voting, including Statewide implementation and costs; language regarding City Attorney, including investigatory authority and subpoena power; negotiating wages and CBAs; recommendations that can be

implemented regardless of form of government; requirements of a PUB Member versus a Council Member; campaign financing requirements, noting implementing the process, creating an elections commission, and what the State uses; transition timeline for form of government change; clarification of State law regarding salary commissions; clarification on change of form of government, noting executive power, public understanding and perceptions, what other municipalities have done under a different form of government that works better, and academic review of form of government; and sending items to the ballot that are independent of each other.

Deputy Mayor Hines provided closing comments, including thanking the CRC Members and the process for reviewing the recommendations going forward.

ADJOURNMENT

On proper motion, the special meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.



Victoria R. Woodards, Mayor



Nicole Emery, City Clerk