

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION  
MEETING  
Thursday, February 16, 2006, 8:00 a.m.  
6<sup>th</sup> Floor Front Conference Room  
Council Office Building**

**Minutes**

**Commission Members Present:**

Kenneth Muir, Chair  
Barbara Smith Hawk, Vice Chair  
Julie Davis  
Mollie Habermeier  
Cheryl Kagan  
Robert Skelton (via telephone)  
Shelton Skolnick  
Sally Sternbach  
Michael McKeehan  
Robert Reeder (via telephone)

**Staff:**

Sonya Healy, Legislative Analyst  
Carol Edwards, Legislative Services  
Coordinator  
Justina Ferber, Legislative Analyst  
Marc Hansen, Chief, Division of General  
Counsel, Office of the County Attorney

**Commission Members Absent:**

Randy Scritchfield

**Guests:**

Dale Tibbitts, Montgomery County Civic  
Federation

The meeting began at 8:10 a.m.

Dale Tibbitts, Montgomery County Civic Federation, offered the Commission an update on the status of the Montgomery County Delegation's action on Bill MC 604-06, concerning the number of signatures required to petition a Charter amendment.

**I. Discussion of Issues/Subcommittee Reports**

**B. Congruency of Petition/Ballot Language**

A revised draft subcommittee report was distributed, and the Commission continued to debate this issue. Marc Hansen commented (reference Section 16-16 of the County Code) that he is not sure the County has the power to change the sequence of the process in finalizing ballot language. He reiterated that any changes to the process might require changing State law if the Council agrees to move forward on this recommendation.

**Action:** Commissioner McKeehan will revise the draft report on this issue to incorporate comments made by Commission members.

**Action:** The Commission voted in favor of the substance of the subcommittee's report with a final version to be reviewed by the Commission. The vote was as follows:

10 in favor  
1 Commissioner absent

### **C. Number of Signatures Required to Petition a Charter Amendment**

The latest version of the subcommittee's report was distributed to the Commission. This issue is currently being debated by the County Delegation in the Maryland General Assembly. The Commission Chair reminded Commission members that this subject is not a Charter Review issue, but the Commission decided to comment on it in the report.

### **D. Proposals to Change the Structure of the Council**

Commissioner Sternbach submitted a paper summarizing positions taken by some Councilmembers on the size and mix of the Council. Commissioner Sternbach suggested that a vote be taken first to see if the Commission members agreed to continue an unspecified mix of at-large and district Councilmembers and then move into issues related to the size and structure of the Council.

**Action:** A motion was made and seconded to continue an unspecified mix of at-large and district Councilmembers. The vote was as follows:

7 in favor  
3 against  
1 Commissioner absent

**Action:** A motion was made and seconded to change the size of the Council from 9 to 11 Councilmembers. The vote was as follows:

3 in favor  
7 against  
1 Commissioner absent

**Action:** A motion was made and seconded to maintain the current size of the Council at 9 with some mix of at-large and district representation. The vote was as follows:

7 in favor  
3 against  
1 Commissioner absent

**Action:** A motion was made and seconded to continue the current mix of the Council with 5 district and 4 at-large Councilmembers. The vote was as follows:

6 in favor  
4 against  
1 Commissioner absent

The Commission Chair will write the first draft of the majority report and submit it to staff to circulate to all the Commission members. A request was made by one of the dissenters to include a minority report on this issue in the final Commission report.

The Commission Chair and Commission members Kagan and Hawk agreed to edit the first draft of the compiled report.

Commissioners discussed other topics that could be addressed at the end of the report in a section entitled “other issues”.

**Action:** A motion was made and seconded to include the following issues at the end of the report.

- Recommendation to encourage a “farm team” approach for the development of future County Government leaders as suggested by Councilmember Praisner
- Campaign finance reform
- Information on increasing the number of signatures required to petition a Charter Amendment

### **III. Administrative Items**

#### **Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made to approve the December 15 minutes. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved. A motion was made to approve the January 19 minutes. The motion was seconded and the minutes were approved with minor changes.

**Note:** Commission members agreed that at the March meeting, Commission member Scritchfield, who was absent from this meeting, should be allowed to indicate how he would have voted on the motions made at the February meeting for the record.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 16<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 a.m.

Meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.