

CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION
Wednesday, September 14, 2011 – 8:00 a.m.
6th Floor Conference Room
Council Office Building

Commission Members Present:

Molly Mahoney Matthews, Chair
Mark Feinroth, Vice-Chair
Jeannie Cho
Mariana Cordier
Wendell Holloway
Guled Kassim
Thomas King
Pamela Mason
Albert Pearce

Staff:

Justina Ferber, County Council
Amanda Mihill, County Council

Guests:

Councilmember Roger Berliner
Lou D'Ovidio, Office of Councilmember
Berliner

Commission Members Absent:

Diane Nash Dillon
Jerry Pasternak

Commission Chair Molly Matthews called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m.

I. Administrative Items

The Commission approved the minutes from the July 13 meeting. The minutes were approved unanimously among those present.

II. Open Discussion of Potential Issues

Commission members reviewed the list of potential issues that have been raised. These issues include:

- Provision to encourage the Board of Education to comply with the Maryland Open Meetings Act
- Allow a special hiring authority for people with disabilities
- Increasing the size of the Council by 2 district members
- Abolish Council districts
- Prohibiting County employees from holding outside employment

Commission members agreed to seek a verbal opinion from the County Attorney about whether the issues related to the open meetings act and outside employment for County employees were appropriate Charter material.

Commission members discussed whether to study the issue of changing the structure of the Council. Members briefly discussed the structure of other legislatures and noted that Baltimore City and Prince George's County have all districts. Commission members agreed to table the final decision on whether to study this issue until the October meeting.

Commission members discussed whether to study the issue of a special hiring authority for people with disabilities. Council staff provided a brief explanation of the prior Commission's review and recommendation on this issue. Several Commission members were interested in pursuing the issue and requested staff to provide them with material that the last Commission reviewed.

Commission members discussed the issue of collective bargaining and the authority for the County Executive to fund or not fund the bargaining contracts. Several Commission members were interested in pursuing this issue and requested staff to provide them with background material on the issue.

One Commission member requested staff research whether the Office of Human Rights is established in the Charter.

III. Meeting with Council Vice President Roger Berliner

Commission members met with Council Vice President Roger Berliner. Responding to Commissioner questions about issues related to collective bargaining and a special hiring authority for people with disabilities, Councilmember Berliner noted that he would give thought on the subjects and report back. Responding to Commissioner questions about the structure of the Council, Councilmember Berliner shared his belief that the present system (5 district members and 4 at large members) was balanced and he was leary of expanding the size of the Council. Finally, responding to Commissioner questions about Councilmembers having outside employment, Councilmember Berliner shared his belief that the current system of requiring Ethics Commission approval for outside employment for Councilmembers works well.

Councilmember Berliner also explained the issue of public power with Commissioners and that the issue was raised because of Pepco's reliability performance and that Pepco has 2 major stakeholders (customers and shareholders). Councilmember Berliner noted that the Council is only in the information gathering stage and has requested an opinion from the Attorney General on the subject. Some Commissioners noted their belief that the Charter does not prohibit the Council from undertaking this issue.

Meeting adjourned at 9:28 a.m.