



A Charter Review Committee Meeting of the City of Everett was held on April 7, 2016 in the 10th floor Mayor’s conference room of the Wall Street Building located at 2930 Wetmore Ave. The meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. and was presided over by Committee Chair Reid Shockey.

Attendees:

Committee Members	Christopher Adams Terrie Battuello Megan Dunn Dave Koenig Jim Langus Tom Norcott Clair Olivers	Reid Shockey Michael Swanson Erica Temple Michael Trujillo Walter White Mark Nesse
Excused Members	Jo Metzger-Levin	Angie Sievers
Guests	Attorney Thom Graafstra	Geographer Dr. Richard Morrill (by phone)
City Staff	City Attorney: Jim Iles	Admin: Lisa Harrison

1. Call to order

The March 30th meeting minutes were approved unanimously with amendments requested by Committee Member Battuello.

2. Comments from the public

Jackie Minchew: The Committee decided not to require any additional councils or boards in the Charter. Minchew would like to have a more detailed mention of the city’s responsibility when it comes to climate change. He asked them to form a citizen’s committee on energy, climate change and economics. In 2006 an intern was hired to gather information on greenhouse gases in Everett which was delivered in 2011 and did not result in any action. Paul Roberts has also drafted something with Climate Solutions. Minchew urged the committee to add something to the Charter which would be a call to action for the City Council to act on this matter as they have not done so or recommend to the City Council that they create and ordinance to form a committee.

M.J. Donovan Kramer introduced herself as representing the League of Women Voters. Is attending to observe the process and hopes this document has the best review possible.



3. Discussion with Committee counsel Thom Graafstra

Thom Graafstra has been retained and is already doing some work for the committee. Several committee members had a conference call with him in the past week and discussed City Council districting. As an attorney in Snohomish with Weed, Graafstra & Associates, he does work with governmental bodies on municipal issues. His experience includes providing counsel for the City's 2006 Charter Review Committee, and he has done work for the City of Everett.

- Graafstra looked into why the ward system was rejected by the City of Snohomish 15 years ago. It was very political; wards didn't seem to be effective according to the city's leaders. Also Snohomish converted to being an optional municipal code city manager form of government that requires general elections be done on an at-large basis.
- Graafstra mentioned that some Eastern Washington communities have had issues with at-large councils; Yakima was ordered by a court to adopt council districts. Wenatchee has a subcommittee that has been studying districting as an option.
- Graafstra was asked during a conference call to address the role of the committee on the subject of districting. He mentioned that he focused on first class cities and looked at how many have considered districting. There are 10 first class cities in Washington; 6 are like the City of Everett with a strong mayor and council, 4 have a council-manager form of government. He reviewed the composition of the various cities.
 - In terms of approach, he looked at Seattle, which specified in its charter the number of positions elected at-large and by district and described at great length each of the district boundaries.
 - In Tacoma's charter, the city is divided into 5 districts and also has at-large positions, but the city council has the authority to determine where the districts are and how they are divided by a separate ordinance. Bremerton follows a similar approach.
- Vice Chair Dunn referred to her earlier request that he take a look at the state code RCW 29A.04.330 which talks about all general elections being held in the odd numbered years so wanted to make sure that they could hold elections on the even years. Graffstra agreed to look into this.
- Committee member Adams said he believes the committee needs to discuss what issue those in favor of districting are trying to solve. Representation as well as being in



compliance with the Voting Rights Act appears to be part of the issue. Graafstra mentioned a recent Supreme Court decision regarding districting in Texas which confirmed that districting should be done on a gross population basis.

A question was asked as to whether the committee has dropped the ranked choice option. Per Chair Shockey, this has not been dropped and he is following up to get more detail.

4. Discussion with Richard Morrill (participating via phone) to discuss his approach to City Council districting (5:00)

- Shockey asked for Morrill’s thinking on the topic of districting. Morrill explained that he has been doing this work for 50 years. As a geographer he believes in districting for two reasons 1) we live in a country that values districting as a way of representation. 2) more representation of women, greater diversity. When you have a council at-large you tend to have people from the “power center.”
- What pushback did you get from the opponents’ side?
 - In the case of Seattle he said he was careful to craft a district that was primarily a minority community. Two minority districts were sought, but he pointed out that they might not get either if they ask for 2.
 - He started with the neighborhood delineations and worked from there. Most remained intact. Had over 100 neighborhoods. Districting must meet the requirement of 1 person, 1 vote. Much better to have the map as part of the recommendation to the city council versus suggesting they do it. In the case of Seattle, a citizens committee was created to design this and Morrill provided recommended boundaries.
- Did you look at ranked choice approach versus districting?
 - Morrill responded that he does not know enough about this option.
- Is there anything unique about the City of Everett? Don’t understand why women candidates would have an advantage with districting.
 - It is easier to run when you don’t have to run at-large...can focus on your district constituents. There are barriers to running at-large and money is one of those.

Shockey asked the committee members for comments based on what was heard during the discussion with Richard Morrill.

- Some felt that the cost issue was an appealing reason to consider districting. Requires money to make signs and fliers, mailings, etc. It may encourage more people to run



rather than so many being unopposed. Encourages minorities to run since they would represent their own neighborhood. One committee member mentioned that based on experience it costs around \$20,000 to run for City Council in Everett.

- One stated that gender does not seem to be an issue in Everett. We've had an increase in the presence of women and even have had women run against each other and it feels like suggesting that having smaller districts to favor women is insulting, suggesting that women can't be successful at-large.
 - It was clarified that Morrill was referring to the fact that if you can diversify where the candidates need to come from you can get better representation (versus the North where there is the "power center").
- One committee member who is in favor of districting stated that it has been proven to provide more accountability for the Councilmembers because they are responsible to their neighbors.
 - Discussion took place as to whether accountability is the issue they need to solve, specifically is there not enough accountability for the south? Districts might make people have closer contact with those experiencing issues.
 - It appears that South Everett it is not a population that gets as much attention—is that actually the case? Is there a way to quantify city expenditures by neighborhood? Attorney Jim Iles stated that this might be a big undertaking but he will ask if this is possible.
- It was asked whether or not the city has had any minorities file grievances about our current electoral system that would make this an issue. The committee members asked that staff follow up on this issue for the next meeting.
- One commented that they were surprised at how things have worked out in past years based on the data that has been provided, stating that they do not see any issues based on the data. There were actually more voters registered in the south versus the north.
 - Shockey stated that he disagrees with 41st street being considered the dividing line between north and south Everett, suggesting that it should be Madison or 84th street. Would be curious to know what the representation looks like if you adjust the dividing line.
- The suggestion was made that the committee should write out a statement as to the issues they see that could be solved by districting or other solutions. Once they agree on the statement, it will help the committee move forward.



- The issue was raised that many people who live in South Everett might not actually identify themselves as an Everett citizen. Some may think Mill Creek, Lynwood, etc. Some are in the Mukilteo School District so they focus on that community rather than Everett.
 - Once committee member stated that in his observation there is much more engagement in community activities and neighborhood meetings in the north Everett areas versus the south Everett areas.

5. Discussion of process to be used from now until deadline in order to get report completed

- Shockey requested discussion on how to move forward/talk through the outline he distributed last week. In order to get thinking coordinated and moving forward on districting, he asked for volunteers to take a position and write out pros and cons. He noted that they have been provided with recommended language from city staff for the ballot on 1) City Council Meetings and 2) Updating archaic language. They also received language from Committee Member Clair Olivers regarding a proposed amendment.
- Shockey explained that his outline is to be thought of as the table of contents for their report. He included “major” items which would be the things they voted on and “minor” are recommendations to City Council that won’t be on the ballot.
- A committee member asked who will write the report once they have agreed on everything. Iles stated that it will have to be a combined effort. Those items the committee wants to go to the ballot will need to be written in the format provided by the city staff with narrative, rationale and minority reports.

6. Return to master list of items to discuss those remaining

SECTION 1.5: INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS— previously tabled for further discussion (Add language that covers Native American Tribes)

- One committee member stated that politically it would be good to acknowledge the tribes more specifically since they are important partners.
- One is concerned if it is on the ballot and voted down. The current charter allows for business partnerships with tribes without any changes.
- Motion made and seconded to add the word “tribal” after federal in Section 1.5. Vote: 9 yes, 4 no (not passed).



7. Shockey suggested that committee members volunteer to write opinions on the districting issue. It was agreed upon that in the next meeting each committee member would state their current opinions.

8. Date and topics for next meeting 4/14/2016

Agenda next week:

- Focus entirely on the issue of districting. Decide at the end of the meeting what the committee will recommend to the Council on this issue.
- Committee Member Swanson volunteered to present advantages of maintaining at-large council at the next meeting

Note: The meeting on 4/14 will be in the 5th floor Human Resources training room

The meeting was adjourned at 6:29 p.m.