



# Charter Review

## Administrative Subcommittee Minutes

Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street, Room 12  
[www.cityoftacoma.org/charterreview](http://www.cityoftacoma.org/charterreview)

March 25, 2014 – 7:00 p.m.

Committee Member Ushka called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m.

Committee Members Present: 6 – Baarsma, Hahn (participated telephonically),  
Leighton, Miller, Ushka, and Van Dyk (arrived at  
7:16 p.m.)

Committee Members Excused Absence: 1 – Edmonds.

### **Discuss the City Manager and the Powers Thereof**

At approximately 7:12 p.m., Committee Member Baarsma requested to find out where, in the City Charter, the City Manager is referenced. Discussion ensued regarding Section 3.1 of the Charter, the use of standard language, and language within the Model City Charter. Committee Member Ushka noted there are no changes to this section at this time, pending review of the Model City Charter.

Committee Member Van Dyk arrived here, at 7:16 p.m.

Discussion followed regarding Section 3.2 and 3.4 of the City Charter, including whether there should be language requiring the City Council to confirm employee appointments, City Council communication with staff, and potential impacts if the form of government (FOG) changes. The Committee Members requested further research on whether any other cities with a Council/Manager FOG require appointments to be confirmed by the City Council. Committee Member Leighton inquired whether there could be a single amendment that would change Section 3.4 and Article II. Discussion continued regarding support for Council to confirm the appointment of Directors/department heads. The Committee requested staff contact Human Resources to see if there is a class of employees that would achieve their goal.

The Committee then reviewed Section 3.7 and the City Clerk. City Clerk Doris Sorum, provided background information on the City Clerk's reporting structure. Discussion followed regarding the voter registration and the fact that this work is generally performed by the Pierce County Auditor. Committee Member Ushka noted this section is being addressed by the Human Resources Subcommittee.

Committee Member Leighton inquired about appointments by the City Manager, particularly the City Attorney, if the “FOG rolls in.” Committee Member Ushka requested the list of 86 cities used as comparable cities could be emailed to the University of Puget Sound (UPS) interns to assist with research.

Discussion ensued regarding the City Attorney appointment and Section 3.6 of the Charter, noting there should be language in Section 3.6 that states that the City Attorney be free to provide legal advice to the City Council. Committee Member Ushka requested the UPS interns focus their research on Options 2 and 3 discussed at the March 18, 2014 Subcommittee meeting, related to the City Attorney.

**Discuss Potential Amendments to Article III**

This item was discussed earlier in the meeting.

**Discuss Impacts to Article III related to the Form of Government**

At approximately 7:50 p.m., Committee Member Baarsma provided a handout relating to the powers of the Mayor for the Subcommittee’s reference. Committee Member Leighton inquired about the amendment process, asking whether several sections of the Charter could all be eliminated in one amendment. He then requested further information from the City Attorney’s Office (CAO) regarding the amendment process. Committee Member Baarsma requested further research on how the City of Spokane changed their FOG. Committee Member Miller suggested that the UPS interns look at the City Charters of the 20 cities with a Mayor/Council/CAO FOG. Discussion followed regarding the Mayor/Council/CAO FOG, common characteristics, and the work of the Charter Review Drafting Subcommittee. Committee Members Baarsma and Miller stated they will research the characteristics of the Mayor/Council/CAO FOG and provide framework at the next meeting.

**Public Comment**

None.

**Committee Comments**

None.

**Adjournment**

Committee Member Leighton moved to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Committee Member Miller. On proper motion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

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Catherine Ushka, Committee Member

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April Larsen, Administrative Assistant