Charter Review
Legislative Subcommittee Minutes
Tacoma Municipal Building North, 733 Market Street, Room 12
www.cityoftacoma.org/charterreview

April 2, 2014 – 6:00 p.m.

Chair Leighton called the meeting to order at 6:17 p.m.

Committee Members Present: 5 – Brackett, Farrell, Leighton, Merritt, and Van Dyk.

Committee Members Excused Absence: 2 – Hahn, and Talton (arrived at 6:35 p.m.).

Work Session – Article II – The Legislative Branch – City Charter
Chair Leighton stated the Committee will discuss Article II Section 2.1 of the Tacoma City Charter relating to the number of council districts and council members. Committee Member Merritt provided and reviewed handouts, including a map of the current Tacoma City Council Districts, a comparison of Council Member versus population for the ten largest cities in Washington State, and Section 5 of the Spokane City Charter related to Elective Officials. He noted in Washington State only Seattle and Tacoma have more than seven council members. Discussion ensued regarding council district configuration, the number of council members, and at-large positions under the current and potential forms of government.

Committee Member Talton arrived here, at 6:35 p.m.

Discussion continued regarding council district configuration, the number of council members, at-large positions, and the impacts of changing the form of government to Mayor/Council or Mayor/Council/Chief Administrative Officer (CAO).

Committee Member Farrell moved to change to seven council districts with the presiding officer rotating on an annual basis to be determined by seniority based on years in office and seat number, if the form of government changes to a Mayor/Council/CAO. Seconded by Committee Member Brackett. Discussion ensued regarding the definition of seniority and at-large positions. Roll call vote was requested and taken, resulting as follows:

Ayes: 4 – Brackett, Farrell, Merritt, and Talton
Nays: 2 – Leighton and Van Dyk
Absent: 1 – Hahn

The motion was declared adopted.
Chair Leighton requested Committee Member Merritt draft proposed language for the approved motion.

Committee Member Farrell moved to leave the make-up of the Council as it stands, if the form of government remains Mayor/Council. Seconded by Committee Member Talton. Discussion ensued regarding the impacts of Mayor/Council and Mayor/Council/CAO forms of government, and how the current form of government can be strengthened. No vote was taken.

Committee Member Brackett moved to table the previous motion. Seconded by Committee Member Farrell. Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was adopted.

Chair Leighton opened the floor to discuss council staff. Committee Member Farrell reviewed the allowances for the number of council staff allowed under the current Charter. Discussion ensued regarding council staff, including the process for and value of adding staff, duties, whether the Human Resources Subcommittee is working reviewing this issue, and the number of staff that should be added.

Committee Member Brackett moved that in the appropriate section of the Charter, the Council be authorized to contract for staff as required. Seconded by Committee Member Farrell. Discussion ensued regarding council staff, including the number of staff, how they should be added, budget impacts, current authority to hire council staff, and whether new language relating to council staff should be added to the Charter.

Committee Member Brackett moved to recess. Seconded by Committee Member Farrell. Voice was taken and carried. The motion was adopted.

The Committee recessed at 7:25 p.m. and reconvened at 7:30 p.m.

Committee Member Farrell moved to indefinitely table the motion to authorize the Council to contract staff as required. Seconded by Committee Member Brackett. Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was adopted.

Committee Member Farrell moved to allow Chair Leighton to work with Martha Lantz, Deputy City Attorney, to identify the section of the Charter that relates to council staff, develop proposed changes to the Charter language, and advise staff to send the changes to this Committee for feedback. Seconded by Committee Member Merritt. Discussion ensued regarding the type of information to be included in the draft language. Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was adopted.

Committee Member Merritt provided and reviewed handouts related to Neighborhood Councils, including sections of the Spokane City Charter related to Neighborhood Councils, a map of City of Tacoma Neighborhood Councils, and proposed changes to the Charter relating to Neighborhood Councils as developed by the Human Resources Subcommittee. He noted the
Human Resources Subcommittee is recommending adding a small paragraph in the Charter to acknowledge the Neighborhood Councils with detailed information determined via ordinance. Discussion ensued regarding Neighborhoods Councils, including boundaries, and whether references to Neighborhood Councils should be added to the Charter in addition to the amendments proposed by the Human Resources Subcommittee. Chair Leighton stated comments regarding this issue can be given when it is presented to the full Committee by the Human Resources Subcommittee.

Chair Leighton opened the floor to discuss Section 2.2 relating to Council Members not being able to hold other elected positions. He then reviewed amendments to Section 2.2 proposed by Julie Anderson, Pierce County Auditor, which includes adding "excluding precinct committee officer or temporary elected official positions such as charter review board member or freeholder, no person may file for more than one office" to the end of the paragraph. Committee Member Farrell stated he would like to address the section of the Charter related to employees running for an elected office.

Chair Leighton moved to accept the language proposed by Ms. Anderson as presented. Seconded by Committee Member Talton. Discussion ensued regarding whether the word "elected" should be inserted before "office" in the proposed language. Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was adopted.

Chair Leighton stated the Form of Government Subcommittee created a matrix to determine which Subcommittees should be addressing specific issues related to changing the form of government. They requested this Subcommittee fill in the matrix so the amendments can be created at the Drafting Subcommittee meeting on Saturday, April 5, 2014. The Committee reviewed, discussed, and answered the matrix questions relating to the CAO appointment, salary, qualifications, duties, and removal; term limits for the Mayor; appointment of department heads; board and commission nominations; council staff; veto power; the City Attorney appointment; and the transition process from the current form of government. Chair Leighton stated the questions raised in this subcommittee will be discussed at the Drafting Subcommittee meeting, and he will bring their comments back to this Committee.

Chair Leighton requested Committee Merritt draft potential amendment language relating to the authority of Council to override the decision of a City Manager. He then noted any Committee Member can make recommendations on their own, as long as they follow the template provided and bring it to the full Committee for approval.

Chair Leighton stated there is a motion on the table to leave the make-up of the Council as it stands, if the form of government remains Mayor/Council. Discussion ensued regarding the current council configuration.

Committee Member Farrell moved to bring back the tabled motion. Seconded by Committee Member Brackett. Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was adopted.
Chair Leighton restated the motion as follows:

Committee Member Farrell moved to leave the make-up of the Council as it stands, if the form of government remains Mayor/Council. Seconded by Committee Member Talton. Voice vote was taken and carried with Committee Members Merritt and Brackett voting in opposition. The motion was adopted.

Public Comment
None.

Committee Comments
There were no additional Committee comments.

Adjournment
On proper motion, the meeting was adjourned at 8:19 p.m.

Doris Sorum, City Clerk