

March 17, 2021 Charter Review Commission Regular Meeting

Call to Order: Chair Kevin Ranker called the meeting to order at 4:04 pm.

Roll Call: Sharon Abreu, David Anderson, Bill Appel, Janet Brownell, Kyle Davies, Paul Dossett, Jane Fuller, Patty Garcia, Tony Ghazel, Richard Grout, Liz Lafferty, Bob O'Connell, Kevin Ranker (Chair), Olivia Roseberry (Vice Chair), Maureen See, Anne Marie Shanks, Tom Starr. David Dehlendorf arrived at 4:53 pm. Tony Ghazel left at 5:30 pm.

Others Present: SJC Auditor Milene Henley, Minor Lile, Treasurer Rhonda Pederson, Clerk Lisa Henderson, Kathryn Hansen (CRC Assistant), and one unidentified caller. County Assessor John Kulseth, Michelline Halliday, Carl de Boor, and Alexandra Gayek joined later.

Approval of March 10, 2021 meeting **minutes**.

MOVED by Dick Grout; **SECONDED** by Maureen See, to approve the Minutes as presented. Discussion followed. 17 Ayes, 0 Opposed, 0 Abstained. **MOTION PASSED**.

Chair Ranker stated that the notes from the March 12 & March 13 Town Hall meetings need not receive formal approval. He added that the meetings went great.

County Assessor, John Kulseth. Kevin welcomed Mr. Kulseth and Ms. Pederson. John shared his background, with 17 years in the Assessor's office as he worked up to the elected post in 2014. He walked the Commission members through a slideshow explaining the work he and his staff of 10 conduct on an annual basis. 18,000 parcels are assessed each year; 3,000 parcels and new construction receive physical inspections each year on a 6-year rotating basis. His office also determines levy rates for the 28 taxing districts, totaling 33 levies.

The Assessor answered questions from members about his thoughts about the appointed versus elected process, the 6-year inspection cycle, technology utilized, land use programs, Citizens Salary Commission and the disparity between salaries of elected & appointed officials, tools used for assessments, value caps, sea level rise and degradation of land values.

Milene was on hand to explain how the Citizens Salary Commission is comprised.

Kevin thanked John for coming. John added that he is happy to answer questions anytime.

County Treasurer, Rhonda Pederson. Kevin introduced Rhonda. She shared a slideshow illuminating her department and the duties of the four of them. They manage many financial tasks, including foreclosures, cash & investment, bond issues & debt payments, receipting & accounting of revenue, property tax statement preparation and collections, disbursing funds, and serving as the County's designated 'banker'.

Rhonda then shared some thoughts on combining some or all of the County's financial offices (Auditor, Treasurer, Assessor). She cited Pierce County, where the Assessor-Treasurer and the Auditor are elected, and a Finance Director is appointed.

Rhonda fielded questions from the Commission about foreclosures, public records transparency, the potential for mobility/experience of staff to work between other financial departments, and whether there are other structural changes that could help the Treasurer's department. The Treasurer cautioned against losing checks and balances.

Kevin thanked Rhonda for her time and presentation.

Town Halls. Kevin conducted a discussion of takeaways from the recent community meetings. The website will display the list of topics and committee assignments. Kevin will send out a press release summarizing the meetings and encouraging the public to attend CRC and committee meetings.

Open for Public Comment. Chair Ranker opened public comment. Alexandra Gayek said that she put a link in Zoom chat to a Friends of the San Juan's 2004 report, "The Cost of Growth" that shows the cost of residential development equaled \$1.32 per \$1.00 in tax revenue.

New Business. Due to the length of previous discussions, this item was deferred to the next meeting. Commission budget and committee reports should be included.

Town Halls, continued. Olivia shared the summary of ideas collected and Kevin highlighted committee assignments. There was discussion of treatment of each idea brought forth by the public, as some may be outside the purview of the Commission and need to be dismissed; others will require conversation. Kevin will respond to those who submitted ideas. The Commission can both propose amendments and make recommendations to the Council on issues not within the scope of the Charter.

Meeting adjourned at 6:12 pm.

Kathryn Hansen
Recording Secretary

Minutes were approved by consensus at the March 24, 2021 Regular Meeting