



## Charter Review Commission (CRC) Regular Meeting Minutes May 26, 2021

**1. Call to Order** – 4:04pm.

**2. Roll Call:** Sharon Abreu, David Anderson, Bill Appel, Janet Brownell, Kyle Davies, David Dehlendorf, Paul Dossett, Jane Fuller, Patty Garcia, Tony Ghazel, Richard Grout, Liz Lafferty, Bob O'Connell, Kevin Ranker (Chair), Maureen See, Anne Marie Shanks, Tom Starr. absence was excused. Olivia Roseberry (Vice Chair) joined at 4:32pm; Tony Ghazel joined at 6:14pm.

Others present: Mike Thomas, Carl de Boer, Rick Hughes, Alexandra Gayek, Michelline Halliday, Sheriff Ron Krebs, Ben Bama, Lauren Stephens, Minor Lile, Linnea Anderson, Milene Henley, Amy Vira, Bernard Shanks, Christine Minney, Rhonda Pedersen, Steve Ulvi, Randy Gaylord, Karen Parker, Jonathan Welch, Megan McLean (CRC Staff), Kathryn Hansen (CRC Assistant), and 1 unidentified caller.

### **2a. Land Acknowledgement**

**3. Electing the County Manager.** Maureen See provided an overview of committee discussions since February, on this topic. In March, the committee voted unanimously to keep the County Manager as an appointed position. Maureen See and David Anderson shared their findings. Members asked questions about distinction between keeping this position appointed, while the committee made the argument that other elected officers should remain elected, how this action insulates the County Manager from political influence and will the county structure be strong enough to sustain growth and other factors by 2030. David Anderson shared his views related to having an appointed a County Manager and an elected County Executive. He also explained that the Commission took up the discussion at the request of the local League of Women Voters.

Kevin Ranker welcomed County Manager, Mike Thomas, to share more about the current government structure with three elected County Council members and the appointed County Manager at the head of the organization. He explained that it is complicated and there are many considerations. The future of this county and equity among districts is what is most important. Mike thinks this organization is the right size for this county and that it has been able to adapt to economic crises and the recent pandemic. He emphasized that the Council members go far afield to advocate for our County on topics such as ferries and mental health. A County Manager is devoid of political agenda and serves at the will of the Council.

Mr. Thomas fielded questions from members, including how the priorities of the Judicial branch intersect the work of the other two. Mike replied that it is their job to support the courts with staffing and physical space. There was further discussion with members of the committee. Chair Ranker clarified that taking no action on this topic would retain the County Manager as an

appointed position and the Elections versus Appointed Committee recommended.

**4. Follow up to Climate & Environment 5/12 report.** The Committee reviewed the proposed scope and duties of the office of the Climate and Environment Commissioner. The mission is unchanged from their May 12 presentation. They propose a branch of San Juan County government led by an elected commissioner with a climate and environment advisory commission in a single amendment. This would transform the existing Environmental Resources office from Public Works into a new office. The office would be mandated to comment before any DNS, EA, or EIS is made by Community Development on SEPA. Elected County executives hold the authority to enforce ordinances, provided they are not in conflict. They would not be primarily responsible for building codes, fire codes, subdivisions, recreation, public access, tourism, or other county functions already under another department. They propose a 7-member residents' advisory commission and minimum qualifications for the Climate and Environment Commissioner.

Committee members fielded questions, including breadth or narrowness of review, primary jurisdiction, qualifications for office, and wariness over the office as the "creature of the Council". Chair Ranker reminded members that this matter has already received a positive vote; this is providing the additional detail needed to move forward.

**5. Review of approved motions.** Chair Ranker posited whether all issues should move forward or whether they should be split onto two ballots. Kyle Davies suggested the list be reviewed, then deliberate which go on this year's ballot. There will be more discussion on tomorrow's agenda, plus prep for Town Halls. Some issues can be combined into a single measure; others stand on their own.

Kevin Ranker proposed creating an executive committee to work with himself, Olivia Roseberry, Megan McLean, and the Prosecuting Attorney's office. The committee is comprised of Dick Grout, Maureen See, Sharon Abreu, Bob O'Connell, Jane Fuller, Kevin Ranker, and Olivia Roseberry.

**7. Open for Public Comment (5:51pm):**

- Alexandra Gayek, Orcas Island. She said she is confused about Climate & Environment office and officer. She thinks it sounds like a glorified code enforcement officer for codes already in place and not the bold climate action she is hoping for.
- Randy Gaylord, County Prosecuting Attorney. His May 12 memo addressed the establishment of an officer (his points A. and B.). He added that he and his staff are here to make sure that Commission needs are addressed.
- Lauren Stephens, Lopez Island. She does not support the Climate & Environment office. She objects to the Commission taking vote before hearing from the public. She would like to have one click to agendas and see meeting documents posted on the website, so the public has access to that's being discussed.
- Michelline Halliday, San Juan Island. She is confused about the Climate & Environment officer. Questions their partial responsibility for building codes, tourism, and other areas delineated in tonight's presentation.

- Ben Bama, San Juan Island. Thanked members for their work, but admitted he is confused about the Climate & environment role, but is all for the position, whether elected or appointed. They should have the ability to forge a new path.
- Steve Ulvi, San Juan Island. He has been a climate advocate for 30 years. He is not sure this is the right solution. There needs to be more detail about costs, staff, and a climate action plan before the Town Halls and presentation to the Council. He suggests a clear, concise message at the Town Halls.

#### **6. New Business.**

- Initiative & Referendum. Paid signature gathering. They propose paid signature gatherers collecting petition signatures for San Juan County ballot measures must visibly display a statement showing they are a "paid signature gatherer" to each person from whom they receive a signature. This may be fulfilled by posting a legible and conspicuous sign, or placard, or wearing a badge stating, "Paid Signature Gatherer".

**MOVED** by Anne Marie Shanks; **SECONDED** by Janet Brownell, to approve the proposal related to paid signature gatherers as presented. Discussion followed. 13 Ayes, 0 Opposed, 2 Abstained (Paul Dossett and Tony Ghazel). **MOTION PASSED.**

- Justice & Equity proposals. Jane Fuller talked members through finer changes to the previous document. A few more changes were suggested.
- Tribal Acknowledgement. Kyle Davies presented language that was developed and used by Environmental Resources and at many Coast Salish meetings. Kyle stressed that the language is important and must be included as is or not at all. It is proposed to add this as the very first item in the Charter, "Let us acknowledge we reside on the ancestral lands and waters of the Coast Salish people who have called this place home since time immemorial and let us honor inherent, aboriginal and treaty rights that have been passed down from generation to generation."

#### **Review of approved motions, continued.**

**ADJOURNMENT** – Adjourned at 6:33 pm.

Kathryn Hansen  
CRC Assistant

<i>Minutes were approved by consensus at the May 27, 2021 Regular Meeting</i>
---