

CRC Justice & Equity Subcommittee Meeting 2/22/21 Notes

List of issues put forward (thus far) for this group to explore:

1. Creation of an independent citizen's law and justice oversight committee (Kevin)
2. Is the Charter and the current structure of the Local Government going to be able to serve our County effectively in terms of having respect for the equal and equitable rights of all regardless of sex, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, socio-economic class, ability, etc.? (Jane)
3. Deepen/Broaden incorporation of indigenous native values, perspectives, problem solving in County structure (Kyle)
4. Expand recruitment of/inclusion of regional native individuals in government elected, appointed office and civil service (Kyle)
5. Entertain development of a County-level Consular office for Foreign (Canadian) and Native (Tribal) Affairs (Kyle)
6. Proactively incentivize younger and multicultural populations into local Government elected/appointed/decision-making positions (Kyle)

Agenda:

4:00 - 4:10 Welcome to the Committee:

- Share briefly with one another why we are interested in exploring Justice and Ethics issues as part of this Charter Review process, and what issues you are most passionate about. What strengths and skills do you feel you bring to the work of this Committee.

4:10 - 4:15 Meeting Format:

- How informal / formal? Note-taking (Sharon)? Invitation to other Commissioners to join? Open meetings to the public? Invitation to resource persons?

4:15 - 4:45 Scope of the Committee:

- Review of / edits to issues that have been put forward so far, and consider assignment of tasks.

- What sections of the Charter should we be focusing on?

4:45 - 4:50 Background reading

- Sections of the Charter pertaining to the work of this Committee
- Other resource materials - e.g. King County Charter Review Commission - proposed amendment. King County Charter - examples of a charter developing offices or positions that meet the core values of a progressive county. See Sections 260 and 265.

https://www.kingcounty.gov/council/legislation/kc_code/03_Charter.aspx. Full text of CRC King County approved amendments:

https://www.kingcounty.gov/~media/independent/charter-review-commission/2020/Approved_KC_CRC_Report_-_Full.ashx?la=en

4:50 - 5:00 Next Steps

Indicative timeline for the work of the Committee, reporting back to the Commission, next meeting's agenda.

Notes:

4pm: Jane called the meeting to order.

Sharon:

How can we best respond to the needs of people of color in SJC?

How can we bring people in to give us feedback and help us know if we're being inclusive and supportive or not? Are the police in SJC educated about racial sensitivity?

Kyle:

He works a lot with seniors, for SJC Health Dept.

We barely acknowledge that this is such a rich historical place for the tribes. There's very little appreciation of that history. Anything non-white is not represented in the county government anywhere. SJCC meetings begin with a land acknowledgment, but how can this be more represented in the county's structure.

What do we want to say about our collective identity in the Preamble and throughout the Charter?

Jane:

Context setting here today.

She grew up mostly in B.C. Her background and professional work - international career on issues of gender equality, human rights, equity, local governance.

Progressive population in SJC pushes the boundaries and wants to reach out to disenfranchised sectors of the population.

To what extent do our social services serve people?

What about the homeless population, young people with diverse genders, and the Mexican population?

Young people are more accepting of diversity a lot of the time. We have a responsibility to respect those who are coming behind us. The uniqueness of SJC, being open to embracing diversity and not being afraid of it. She is new to the culture of SJC and the local government, but she brings her international cross-cultural work and experience to this work.

Kyle: There's a missing piece in the SJC workforce - people are not getting replaced when they retire, so the county government is getting older. There's an opportunity for fundamental impact in SJC.

Sharon: How do we invite people of color in SJC into our process? How we have discussions with each other is so important - what feels safe to historically marginalized people living in our county?

Jane: She has some people on Lopez she can talk with.

Sharon: We also need to bring in people with disabilities.
Teaching racial equity is a real skill - how we do this is very important, so as to not alienate people who get triggered and feel threatened when this subject is broached?

Kyle: How to change behaviors through education, and how does that apply to county governance. Question of staffing?

Jane: Sexual harassment issue at Lopez middle school. More than the state's required training is needed. What is the responsibility of our local government in that regard? King County and its Charter may be instructive. We may want to do some follow-up with those people looking through a justice and equity lens.

Jane: Should we use Robert's Rules? Do we need to do that with a 3-person subcommittee?

Kyle: Is our contribution going to be mostly to the Preamble? Or are there other places in the Charter this subcommittee can make an impact?

Sharon: Should we start reaching out to people of color in our communities? Maybe wait another week or two? We need to be able to tell them what we're thinking about - what we think we can do.

Jane: We have the Town Halls - invite people to attend those. Meantime, we can talk with a couple of people we know. Jane knows a couple of people she would talk with.
What other counties have had similar experiences recently, what have they explored and come up with? Go to MRSC.org.

Kyle: Can we add a new chapter - finding a hook or two onto which we can capture the inclusive county we aspire to be, and which serves its people in that way?
Do we want to take a bill of rights approach?

Jane: Julianne Battalia brought up the rights of nature concept. How does that tie in with a bill of rights for people in SJC? Is it too progressive for SJC?

Sharon: Both rights of nature and a bill of rights seek to speak for those who are more vulnerable and either won't or can't speak up for themselves, whether humans or the flora, fauna and marine ecosystems around and among us.

Jane: Points 3, 4 & 6 above echo affirmative action - are there existing examples of this in any county charters?

Kyle: Our video recordings and notes should go into a Microsoft Teams file.

Jane: Will Kathryn or Olivia create folders/subfolders for us?

Kyle is happy to do that for us.

This week:

All: Dive into the King County links provided above.

Jane: Will look into a bill of rights example that may already exist in a county charter, explore MRSC.org, and reach out to a couple of people on Lopez.

Kyle: Will do the mechanics of the file sharing in Teams, and explore his specific bullet points on topic material to see if anyone else has addressed those. He will look into where in the Charter that language could go.

Sharon: Will email the notes from today's meeting to Jane, Kyle, Kevin and Olivia. She will go to the King County links and reach out to a couple of people on Orcas.

Kyle: Will prepare the agenda for next Monday's meeting.

Meeting adjourned at 5:20 pm.