

Charter Review Commission (CRC)
Climate & Environment Committee Meeting Minutes
April 28, 2021

Start time: 10:03am
End time: 12:00pm

In Attendance:

Anne Marie Shanks, Bob O'Connell, Sharon Abreu, Kyle David, Tom Starr, Liz Lafferty, Dick Grout, Kevin Ranker

Members of the Public:

Alexandra Gayek, Michelline Halliday, Ben Bama

1. Recording/ Roll Call
2. Minutes/Notes – Minutes approved.
3. Continue discussion about the scope of the Office of the Climate and Environment Commissioner (working title).

Discussion on Scope of the Office - Worked on language in draft proposal:

- Includes entire environmental resource division, everything Kendra has now. We're adding environmental health division.

Discussion around term "Cultural Resources":

- Dick: There's a state program that handles Cultural Resources.
- Kevin: It's about time we as white people stop saying what is needed by Indigenous nations - will in future be done with consultation with Coast Salish tribes.

Discussion around "Safe food and drinking water" language.

Discussion around Code Enforcement as it relates to damage to the environment:

- Kevin: This is fundamental to this new dept.

- Bob: What does "Code Enforcement" entail?
- Kevin: Depends on the individual violation -provided two examples. This new Commissioner would be able to levy fines and bring about restoration work.

Discussion on "Leadership".

Discussion on "Qualifications", including discussion around requirements of being a resident and registered voter in SJC for a certain period of time:

- Kevin: This is appropriate for an elected official.
- More discussion around the number of years we should make a minimum.
- WA State has one of the loosest residency laws in the state - people who have homes here and vote here but don't actually live here, though they are considered residents for tax purposes. This person needs to be an actual physical resident of SJC, not just for tax purposes.
- Discussion about meaning and appropriateness of "professional" – the word "applicable" was substituted for "professional".

Discussion about SJC Climate & Advisory Council - the makeup and role of this body:

- Kevin: We should consider the First Peoples whose land was stolen as citizens of SJC - generational healing, management decisions.
- Liz: Include Coast Salish tribes because of the generational wisdom/depth of knowledge they would bring to the conversation - we're new to the game in attempting to do that.
- Discussion of the term "Natural Resources Business" - could mean a lot of different things, from habitat restoration to solar installation to recycling.
- Sharon: "Natural Resources" often equated with extractive industries. Suggested "local green jobs" and/or "environmental preservation organizations" instead.

- Kevin: Thinks there should be one extractive industry on the committee. Some argued against this.

Discussion of "Dept. Responsibilities and Authority":

- Big, excellent list of bullet points put together by Anne Marie.:
- Some language changes were made.
- Kyle: "responsibility" vs. "authority" - need to hash out the differences.
- Bob: They mean two different things and we mean to indicate both of those.

Discussion of "Employee Assumptions" (final section):

- Anne Marie will get some collective bargaining language in there.

Discussion around subject of Findings:

- Anne Marie: We'll discuss the findings at our May 5 meeting.

Discussion of Timelines and Readiness:

- The full CRC may not be ready to vote after we make our presentation.
- What will be the last meeting date for this committee?
- Plan to start voting on things in next week's CRC meeting.

Agreement on May 12 as our committee's date to present to the full CRC.

4. New Business – None discussed today.

5. Public Comment:

Alexandra (Orcas):

Distressed that our process deprioritizes nature itself. Nature is the original inhabitant and we are giving it no voice. Doesn't want extraction business to have a seat at the table on the C&E Advocacy Committee. We need environmental protection - protection of Nature. This goes way beyond just managing our carbon footprint. Pleaded with the committee to revisit this.

Michelline (SJI):

Taken aback by the notion that whale watching vessels and companies need a seat at the table - they don't speak for the whales. Some of them are very responsible, some are not. There continues to be a race-around mentality when there are whales nearby. Cited a couple of examples within the last 7 months. Said the voice for the Orcas needs to be in here.

Ben Bama (SJI):

Enforcement seems to be an issue - our visions are pointless without proper enforcement. Agrees with Michelline. Asked:

1. Is it possible to reapportion some funds from the Land Bank tax to reinforce code enforcement?
2. Could that be put on a ballot?
3. Concerned about any county employees possibly losing their jobs – could they be moved to working on code enforcement?

6. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm.