

Howard County Charter Review Commission

APPROVED MINUTES

Date: Thursday, May 19, 2011

Time: 9:03 a.m.

Place: C. Vernon Gray Conference Room, George Howard Building

Council Members in attendance:

- Donna Richardson
- Michael Davis
- Sharon Ahn
- Cindy Ardinger
Regina Clay
- Thomas Coale
- Edward Cochran
- Charles Feaga
- Alice Giles
- Yvonne Howard
- Steve Hunt
- Sang Oh
- Andrew Stack
- Joshua Tzucker
- James Walsh

- Ms. Richardson opened the meeting.
- Members unanimously approved the minutes.
- Ms. Richardson began the review of the Charter
- Sec. 210 Printing Compilation
 - Mr. Hunt asked what promptly means; how often is Code updated?
 - Mr. Vannoy: there is no time table but it is done about 3 or 4 times per year
 - Mr. Davis suggested with electronic media can be posted monthly
 - Mr. Coale suggested if it said “made available to public” it allow flexibility
- Sec. 211 Referendum
 - Ms. Richardson suggested increasing the number from 5,000 to 10,000, or making it a percentage of the population
 - Dr. Cochran explained that it is tied to the number of registered voters during the previous gubernatorial election

- Mr. Davis also mentioned that there is the issue of signatures and whether it should be exactly as the voter registration card or can it vary
- Mr. Coale asked if the County's requirement can be less stringent than the state requirement; suggested that the County code should provide more guidance on referendum;
- Mr. Davis suggested having someone from the Board of Elections come discuss the issue with the Commission
- Mr. Tzucker suggested that budget appropriations should be issues that are not subject to referendum; concerned that citizen groups could force spending; pointed to Montgomery County case where there was a referendum on firefighters pension; concern over discussion of teacher pension coming to County
- Sec.212
 - Ms. Ardinger asked whether the Council could audit the Board of Education
 - Mr. Vannoy will get back to the Commission on that issue
- Sec. 214
 - Mr. Tzucker asked how the Council would issue a subpoena; does it have to be majority? Can only the Chair issue a subpoena? Does it need a certain number of votes? Suggested maybe that should be explained a little more
- Art.III
- Sect. 302
 - Ms. Ardinger suggested that if the Commission changes "moral turpitude" in Art. II, should it also be changed in Art. III
- Art. IV
- Sect. 402
 - Mr. Hunt asked why legal professionals in the office of law do not have to be members of the Maryland Bar.
- Sec. 405
 - Mr. Coale suggested have a residency requirement for the County Solicitor; they should have a vested interest in decisions/opinions/actions.
- Commission discusses Public Hearings
 - Suggested 14th, 21st, and 28th of September
 - Would like to hold them at North Laurel Community Center, Glenwood/Gary Arthur Center, and the Florence Bain Center.
- Meeting Adjourned at 10:17 a.m.