

# Howard County Charter Review Commission

## APPROVED MINUTES

Date: Thursday, June 23, 2011

Time: 9:07 a.m.

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

Commission 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

Council Members Courtney Watson Mary Kay Sigaty, and Paul Johnson with the Office of Law were also in attendance.

- Ms. Richardson opened the meeting.
- Members unanimously approved the minutes.
- Ms. Watson spoke with the Commission
  - Provided members with a chart showing the population and Council make-up of each of the charter counties in the state
  - Recommended that the Commission consider look at the information provided and determine whether other council districts are needed; if additional council districts are needed, should they be county wide or should districts be carved out of current districts.
  - There are advantages and disadvantages to each model and the Commission should determine which model works best in the County

- Mr. Feaga asked whether that would give Columbia more voting power
- Ms. Watson pointed out that the school board positions are county-wide and there are no members from Columbia
- Dr. Cochran suggested that it may help the Republican party or areas outside of Columbia because the votes would be concentrated for county-wide positions.
- Mr. Johnson from the Office of Law spoke about section 202(g) declaring any amendment to the General Plan, Zoning Regulations or Zoning Maps a legislative act subject to referendum
- Dr. Cochran asked what the background of the provision was
  - Mr. Johnson stated that there was interest in challenging comprehensive zoning and people thought a referendum may be easier; people were looking to move away from the judicial process that was available
- Dr. Cochran pointed out that the council is doing a lot of ZRA's.
  - Mr. Johnson stated that the Zoning Board process is not being used as much as it was (a Zoning Board decision can be appealed, but an appeal for a ZRA is a referendum)
- Mr. Hunt asked the Council Members present what they thought about changing the requirements for the number of signatures on a referendum
  - Neither Council Member expressed strong opinion for keeping the same or changing it.
- Mr. Walsh noted that neither referendum provision provided for a date of voter registration
- Mr. Davis suggested that the Commission ask the Board of Elections when they come how they interpret the provision regarding registered voters
- Mr. Vannoy said that he will provide information about referendum procedures for other counties
- Commission members reviewed list of possible changes and removed and clarified provisions.
- Meeting Adjourned at 10:30 a.m.