

Charter Review Commission

Minutes

Virtual Meeting via Webex

April 14, 2020

Charter Review Commission Members Participating in Webex Meeting: Richard Butler, Judith Center, James Howard, Tahira Mussarat Husain, Deeba Jafri, Elgin Klugh, Stu Kohn, Fred Leong, Margaret Ann Nolan, Dawn Popp, Paul Skalny, Yolanda Sonnier (Chairperson), and Carolan Stansky

Staff Participating in Webex Meeting: Lynne Rosen, Legislative Analyst, Gary Kuc, County Solicitor, Jennifer Sager, Legislative Coordinator, Office of the County Executive

Ms. Sonnier opened the meeting at 8:35 a.m.

Ms. Popp made a motion to approve the Minutes of the March 24, 2020 meeting. Mr. Klugh seconded the motion. The minutes were approved with Mr. Skalny abstaining. Mr. Kohn abstained due to technical difficulties accessing the audio on Webex.

The members discussed the Preliminary Report of the Commission. The members discussed that all the written testimony submitted to the Commission at the public hearings and the Council districts map submitted during the October 24, 2019 public hearing at the Gary J. Arthur Community Center should be included in the Final Report.

Ms. Sonnier discussed that the members will review and vote on the advisory notes.

Mr. Leong reviewed the following advisory note that he submitted: “Howard County government should formally include in all multi-year capital improvement plan budgets the projected revenue for all years covered by those budgets.”. Mr. Leong discussed that this advisory note should be included as a good practice in the Final Report.

Ms. Stansky made a motion to include the advisory note submitted by Mr. Leong in the Final Report.

Mr. Leong seconded the motion.

The members discussed the advisory note.

The motion passed. Mr. Kohn abstained due to technical difficulties accessing the audio on Webex.

Ms. Stansky reviewed the first advisory note she submitted: “The Commission advises the County Council to study the role of the County Auditor and determine what changes, if any,

should be made to the Charter, Howard County Code, and/or any county policy & procedures to enhance the independence and oversight abilities of the County Auditor and staff.”.

The members discussed the advisory note.

Ms. Stansky made a motion to include the first advisory note she submitted in the Final Report.

Mr. Klugh seconded the motion.

The motion passed. Mr. Kohn abstained due to technical difficulties accessing the audio on Webex.

Ms. Stansky reviewed the second advisory note she submitted: “The Commission advises the County Council, at some point in the future, should commence an examination of the wording/grammar/organization of the Charter, without changing the meaning of the Charter.”.

The members discussed the second advisory note submitted by Ms. Stansky.

Ms. Stansky made a motion to include the second advisory note she submitted in the Final Report.

Ms. Popp seconded the motion.

The motion passed. Mr. Kohn abstained due to technical difficulties accessing the audio on Webex.

Ms. Popp discussed including a sentence at the beginning of the advisory notes in the Final Report that these issues arose during the review of the Charter but did not rise to the level to be included as a recommended Charter amendment.

Ms. Sonnier discussed the Final Report. The advisory notes voted on today and the map will be added to the Final Report. Ms. Sonnier discussed that there is one more meeting scheduled on April 28, 2020, during which the Commission will vote on the Final Report. The term of office of Commission members is two years. If the Council wants the Commission to reconvene for any purpose, the Commission would reconvene.

Ms. Stansky thanked Ms. Sonnier for her leadership.

Ms. Sonnier thanked the members for their dedication to the work of the Commission. The Commission met for a total of 24 meetings beginning at 8:30 a.m. each meeting. The additional Commission meeting dates since the Preliminary Report was submitted to the Council will be added to the Final Report.

Ms. Sonnier thanked Ms. Rosen, Mr. Kuc, and Ms. Sager.

Ms. Sonnier adjourned the meeting at 9:22 a.m.