Howard County Charter Review Commission

APPROVED MINUTES

Date: Thursday, June 2, 2011

Time: 9:03 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 Tzuker
- ☑James Walsh

Sharon Greisz, Director of Finance, and Ray Wacks, Budget Director were also in attendance.

- Ms. Richardson opened the meeting.
- Members unanimously approved the minutes.
- Ms. Richardson began the review of the Charter
    - Art IV.
        - Ray Wacks & Sharon Greisz spoke about grant administration
        - Ms. Greisz suggested that commission consider excluding grants from the lapsed appropriations provision of Sec. 611
        - Mr. Wacks explained that the County has a General Fund and also receives grants that don't always follow County's fiscal year
        - Grants have multiple years; makes it difficult to administer and represent in the budget; Mr. Wacks stated that this is a technical suggestion rather than a policy suggestion

        - Ms. Greisz said she would try to come up with a definition of grant
        - Mr. Davis asked if moving to a two year budget was feasible
        - Mr. Wacks stated that it was easier to manage the budget with one year budgets.
        - Ms. Greisz stated that it is unusual to have the Rainy Day Fund in the Charter; may consider moving it to the Code; technical issue; moving it to the Code allows Finance to put it in a different location on the financial statement presented to the rating agencies
        - Dr. Cochran asked Mr. Wacks to discuss the issues that were raised at the Council budget approval session
        - Mr. Wacks explained that there was some discussion among the Council as to whether the Council should have the authority to move money in the budget
        - Ms. Greisz said that she would provide Commission with definition of grant
- Mr. Oh recommended making a small number of recommendations to the Council
    - Discussion of the number of recommendations and the process of the making recommendations
- Discussion of Charter continued
    - Art. V
        - Mr. Walsh noted that the section 501(b) should state "5(u)" rather than (u).
    - Art. VI
        - Discussion of the recommendation by Ms. Greisz
        - Request Ms. Greisz to come up with a way to word changing Rainy Day Fund from a Charter provision to a Code provision
        - Section 603- discussion of whether press should be given free copy of budget; what is the definition of the press
            - Ms. Richardson recommended that this may be one of the places that the catch-all at the end referencing technology would apply
        - Mr. Walsh pointed out that the definitions are repeated in 615A and 615A
            - Mr. Hunt recommended that definitions should be in 615 once
            - Mr. Vannoy recommended that the definitions should be in 601 along with the other definitions
        - Mr. Vannoy stated that the Office of Law is not sure what the intent for 615(g) was; it has never been used

- Mr. Davis asked that we remind the department heads about the request from the Charter Review Commission because it is difficult to put the provisions of Art. VII in context
- Mr. Vannoy recommended that the same language in Section 706(c) and Section 706(e) should be similar
- Mr. Walsh pointed out a typo in Section 709(c) “influencing thee” should be “influencing the”
- Mr. Vannoy stated that there may be conflicts with state law in Section 906 & 907
- Mr. Walsh recommended that if the referendum percentage or number is changed then Section 1001 should also be changed.

- Mr. Coale noted that there was a correction to the minutes from 05/19, under section 405, he suggested the opposite: questioned whether there should be residency requirements; correction noted in the record
- Mr. Hunt noted correction in his comments on Section 402 from the minutes on 05/19: he asked why all staff for Office of Law would need to be members of the bar, it should not be a broad requirement because could have paralegals that would not need to be members of the bar; correction noted in the record
- Meeting Adjourned at 10:40 a.m.