



**King County**  
**Metropolitan King County Council**  
**Committee of the Whole**

**STAFF REPORT**

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| <b>Agenda Item No.:</b> 5    | <b>Date:</b> 2 June 2008                          |
| <b>Motion No.:</b> 2008-0307 | <b>Prepared by:</b> Rebecha Cusack<br>Nick Wagner |

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**SUMMARY**

The proposed motion acknowledges receipt of the final report and recommendations of the King County Charter Review Commission and thanks the commission members for their outstanding service to the citizens of King County. A copy of the motion is Attachment 1 to this staff report.

**BACKGROUND**

The King County Charter provides that at least every 10 years a citizen commission shall be formed to review the Charter and present to the Council “a written report recommending those amendments, if any, which should be made to the charter.” (Charter § 800)

The 2007-2008 King County Charter Review Commission (“CRC”) held its first meeting on 27 February 2007 and during the next five months conducted an extensive public outreach campaign, inviting hundreds of groups and individuals to provide input on whether there was a need for the Charter to be amended. Besides its own five meetings during this period, the CRC held nine public hearings, one in each Council district. This public outreach campaign elicited more than 350 proposals for charter amendments (some of which were overlapping) from more than 100 groups and individuals.

In September of 2007 the CRC formed four subcommittees to review the 350 charter amendment proposals and winnow them down to a realistic number of proposed amendments to recommend for consideration by the full commission. The four subcommittees were:

- Governmental Structure Subcommittee
- Regional Governance Subcommittee
- Rural-Local Subcommittee
- Ad Hoc and Technical Committee

The subcommittees met regularly from September of 2007 through February of 2008 and forwarded their recommendations to the full commission, which also continued to meet during this period. In February and March, the full commission considered and voted on the subcommittee recommendations and issued a draft report, which was published for public comment. Following the three-week public comment period in April, the commission met twice

more, on April 22 and 29, to consider the comments that it had received and to modify the proposed amendments as it deemed appropriate. (The charter review timeline is described in Attachment 2.)

On Friday, May 30, the CRC transmitted its final report and recommendations to the Council for consideration pursuant to Charter section 800.

Together, the commission and its subcommittees met more than 40 times, with each meeting lasting from two to three hours, and held 13 public forums, including at least one in every council district. Throughout the charter review process, the commission received indispensable assistance from commission staff and from attorneys of the Prosecuting Attorney's Office.

Although the CRC members were a diverse group with strongly-held individual views, the meetings of the commission and its subcommittees were a model of civility and collaboration. The commission's final report contains only two minority reports, and most of the positions taken by the commission were unanimous.

## **THE CRC RECOMMENDATIONS**

The CRC has recommended 12 charter amendments for the Council's consideration. Ten are substantive; two are technical. They are summarized on pages 6-7 of the CRC's final report, which is being provided separately to councilmembers, and are described in detail on pages 15-23 of the report.

The CRC recommends that six of the 12 proposed amendments be placed on the ballot this year, and three each in 2009 and 2010. That recommendation is detailed on page 14 of the CRC's report.

## **INVITEES**

King County Charter Review Commission

Mike Lowry, Commission Co-chair

Lois North, Commission Co-chair

Commission Members

Mark Yango, Charter Review Coordinator

Corrie Watterson Bryant, Project Manager

Becky Spithill, Project Manager

Prosecuting Attorney's Office

Mike Sinsky, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Pete Ramels, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

Susie Slonecker, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney

## **ATTACHMENT**

1. Proposed Motion 2008-0307
2. Charter review timeline



**Signature Report**

**May 30, 2008**

**Motion**

**Proposed No.** 2008-0307.1

**Sponsors** Constantine

1           A MOTION acknowledging receipt of the final report and  
2           recommendations of the King County Charter review  
3           commission and thanking the commission members for  
4           their outstanding service to the citizens of King County.

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6           WHEREAS, the King County Charter is the county's constitution and the  
7           cornerstone of King County government, and

8           WHEREAS, the King County Charter has served King County well during the  
9           almost forty years since the charter was originally approved by the voters, and

10          WHEREAS, in order to keep the charter well-tuned to meet the needs of King  
11          County, the charter provides for a citizen commission to be assembled every ten years to  
12          review the charter and recommend for consideration by the metropolitan King County  
13          council any charter amendments that the commission deems necessary, and

14          WHEREAS, the 2007-2008 King County Charter review commission held its first  
15          meeting on February 27, 2007, and since then has met, either as a full commission or in  
16          one of four subcommittees, more than forty times and held thirteen public forums,  
17          including at least one in every council district, and

**Motion**

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18           WHEREAS, the commission has received testimony and reviewed written  
19           submissions from well over one hundred persons and organizations regarding more than  
20           three hundred fifty suggestions for charter amendments, and

21           WHEREAS, the commission has carefully considered all the suggested charter  
22           amendments and has recommended a list of amendments for consideration by the  
23           council, and

24           WHEREAS, the commission members are a diverse group, representing a variety  
25           of backgrounds, professions and opinions and including at least one representative from  
26           every council district, and

27           WHEREAS, the commission members have served as unpaid volunteers whose  
28           work on the charter review commission has been in addition to their professional and  
29           personal responsibilities, and

30           WHEREAS, despite their other commitments, the commission members have  
31           been tireless in their dedication to the performance of their duties under the charter, and

32           WHEREAS, the commission transmitted its final report and recommendations to  
33           the metropolitan King County council on May 30, 2008, and

34           WHEREAS, in the exercise of the council's duty under the charter, the council  
35           will carefully review and consider the commission's report and recommendations;

36           NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT MOVED by the Council of King County:

37           We acknowledge receipt of the final report and recommendations of the King  
38           County Charter Review Commission, and we thank commission co-chairs Mike Lowry  
39           and Lois North and commission members Trisha Bennett, Juan Bocanegra, Doreen Cato,  
40           Jim English, Dan Gandara, Bryan Glynn, Darcy Goodman, John Groen, Kirstin Haugen,

**Motion**

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41 Tara Jo Heinecke, Gregg Hirakawa, John Jensen, Terry Lavender, Gary Long, Sharon  
42 Maeda, Allan Munro, Sarah Rindlaub, James Williams and Mike Wilkins for their  
43 outstanding service to the citizens of King County. We also thank the commission's staff  
44 and the attorneys of the prosecuting attorney's office for their indispensable work in  
45 support of the commission.

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KING COUNTY COUNCIL  
KING COUNTY, WASHINGTON

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ATTEST:

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**Attachments**      None



## **Overall Charter Review Schedule**

### **Feb 2007 – Aug 2007**

Solicitation of public input

Public hearings (one in each council district, plus speakers at several monthly commission meetings)

### **Sep 2007 – Mar 2008**

Deliberation

Report Writing

### **Apr 2008**

Public comment period (4 public hearings: April 8-15)

Revision of CRC report and recommendations

### **May 2008**

Final preparation of CRC report

May 30: Transmission of final CRC report to Council

### **Jun 2008 – Sep 2008**

Council consideration of proposed amendments

15 Sep 2008: Last date for regular Council meeting to pass ordinance putting proposed charter amendments on Nov. 4 ballot

### **4 Nov 2008**

General Election