



# City of Tacoma

## Charter Review Committee Minutes

March 18, 2024  
5:30 p.m.

747 Market Street, Tacoma WA 98402, Conference Room 220A  
Dial: 253-215-8782 Meeting ID: 915 2560 1849  
Webinar Link: <https://www.zoom.us/j/91525601849>

**REVISED**

### Call to Order

Chair Wamback called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

### Roll Call

**Present: 11** – Nicholas Carr, Silong Chhun, Patrick Fischer, Jason Gauthier, Andre Jimenez, Melissa Malott, Latasha Palmer, Andrea Reay, Rebecca Stith, Stephen Wamback, and Lok Yin Wu

**Absent: 4** – Katie Baird, Maricres Castro, Bryan Flint, and Diamatris Winston

Committee Member Baird arrived at 5:31 p.m., followed by Committee Member Castro at 5:34 p.m., Committee Member Flint at 5:35 p.m., and Committee Member Winston at 7:17 p.m.

All Committee Members participated virtually.

### Approval of Minutes

There were no comments or corrections from Committee Members on the minutes from the February 29, 2024, meeting. The minutes were approved.

Committee Member Castro arrived here, at 5:34 p.m.

### Public Comment

There was no Public Comment.

Committee Member Flint arrived here, at 5:35 p.m.

## Miscellaneous Subcommittee Report

### Preamble

At approximately 5:36 p.m., Wu presented the first topic from the Miscellaneous Subcommittee. The Subcommittee's proposed recommendation is to add a land acknowledgement in the Charter preamble section. Wu presented the current text in the Charter, and the group's objective and rationale behind the proposed recommendation. Wu then introduced two language options the Subcommittee drafted as a preamble insert in the Charter to acknowledge the Puyallup Tribe.

Discussion ensued on the reasoning behind why there are two language options; consultation with the Puyallup Tribe to verify if the acknowledgement is welcomed; discussion on including intent, objectives, goals, purposes, and values in the Charter; Tribal Trust Land; private land ownership questions; and a possible mention of the Tribe's native language. After discussion, the item was given to staff for outreach to tribal staff for further discussion.

### Anti-Discrimination

At approximately 6:03 p.m., Wu presented the second recommendation from the Miscellaneous Subcommittee which is tied to employment anti-discrimination language in Section 6.7 of the Charter. Wu presented the current text in the Charter, and the group's objective and rationale behind their proposal. The Subcommittee's proposal is to change the word "handicap" to "disability" and add verbiage to encourage periodical reassessment and update of Municipal Code language.

Discussion ensued on the reasoning behind the two language recommendation options, suggestion of additional categories, and inconsistencies in Municipal Code language.

**MOTION:** Palmer moved to advance this recommendation to staff for legal review and drafting.

**SECONDED BY:** Stith

**ACTION:** Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted by unanimous consent.

## Power of the People Subcommittee

### Ranked Choice Voting

At approximately 6:16 p.m., Palmer presented for the Power of the People Subcommittee. She thanked those who provided the Subcommittee assistance including subject matter expert guest Lisa Ayrault, Executive Director of Fair Vote Washington by way of opening remarks. The Subcommittee's proposed recommendation is to amend Charter Section 5.3 including language changes to adopt ranked-choice voting.

Palmer presented the group's approach and reasoning behind the Subcommittee's recommendation, which are democracy ensures transparency and accountability, Tacoma's

Charter should reflect Tacoma’s goals and values, and Tacoma adapts and leads. Palmer then gave a quick overview of what ranked-choice voting is, then passed the presentation over to Ayrault to run a mock ranked-choice voting exercise with Committee Members. Palmer continued giving a background on Pierce County’s previous history with ranked-choice voting. She then highlighted what could be different now than previous attempts to adopt ranked-choice voting such as savings in cost and encourages more competitive races from a diverse and inclusive candidate pool. Palmer then talked about what the Subcommittee views as benefits of ranked-choice voting if adopted such as empowered voters, positive campaigns, improves representation, vote your values, and voters like ranked-choice voting.

Discussion ensued regarding the role of the primary election, potential downside, confusing ballots, questions on timing, change as a challenge, cost, delayed results, waiting until statewide adoption for consistency, unclear on how ranked-choice voting would structurally work for Tacoma, burden of voter’s education to one city, request for additional information on other cities who previously implemented ranked choice voting but not state sponsored, and changing the language to allow for more allowances for City Council to make the decision.

Committee Member Winston arrived here, at 7:17 p.m.

Committee discussion continued as members voiced their opinions as to why they would or would not vote for ranked-choice voting to move forward as a Committee recommendation.

**MOTION:** Gauthier moved to refer the recommendation to city staff to craft language that would allow the possibility of ranked-choice voting to be used for city elections.

**SECONDED BY:** Carr

**ACTION:** Roll call vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared passed with nine members voting in favor, five voting against (Baird, Flint, Fischer, Reay, and Wamback) and one member unavailable to vote (Winston).

## **Break**

The meeting recessed at 7:37 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 7:45 p.m.

## **Administrative Subcommittee Report**

### **Planning Commission**

At approximately 7:45 p.m., Carr gave the presentation for the Administrative Subcommittee on amending the City’s Planning Commission in Section 3.8 of the Charter. The Subcommittee’s proposed amendment is to increase the membership number from 9 to 11 as well as to add language to reflect diverse background, experience, and expertise without being overly prescriptive.

Discussion ensued on clarity of the language used in the proposed draft, intention as to the background, experience, and expertise of possible members.

**MOTION:** Gauthier moved to advance the recommendation to staff including two amendments to strike out the words “strive to” between shall and appoint and the word “and” between urban design and business.

**SECONDED BY:** Reay

**ACTION:** Gauthier withdraw the motion. The recommendation will go back to the Administrative Subcommittee for further review.

Discussion continued as Committee Members provided direction on how to move forward with the Subcommittee’s recommendation. The Administrative Subcommittee asked for further clarity on the Committee as a Whole’s preference. Sonja Hallum, Charter Liaison, volunteered to draft two alternation language options for the Committee.

**MOTION:** Flint moved to allow staff to draft two alternative language options for the Committee as a Whole.

**SECONDED BY:** Baird

**ACTION:** Voice vote was taken and carried. The motion was declared adopted by unanimous consent.

## **Other Subcommittee Reports and Discussion**

At approximately 8:24 p.m., Chair Wamback asked for a quick report on items that are ready for discussion for the next meeting. Administrative Subcommittee has two topics ready for discussion, Climate Commission and City Attorney position. The Miscellaneous Subcommittee are still waiting on additional information on the disposition of waterfront property topic. Power of the People Subcommittee will be ready to report the following meeting. Police Accountability Subcommittee are still waiting on legal information. Form of Government Subcommittee worked on going through the 2014 Charter document and transition questions.

## **Staff Update**

At approximately 8:35 p.m. Hallum, updated the Committee on Neighborhood Council engagement work she has been doing.

## **Other Business and Homework**

No other business and homework.

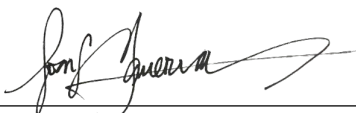
## **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.



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Stephen Wamback, Chair



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Joan Taverna, City Clerk's Office