



A Charter Review Committee Meeting of the City of Everett was held on April 14, 2016 in the 5th floor Human Resources training room of the Wall Street Building located at 2930 Wetmore Ave. The meeting was called to order at 4:30 p.m. and was presided over by Committee Chair Reid Shockey.

Attendees:

Committee Members	Terrie Battuello	Reid Shockey
	Megan Dunn	Angie Sievers
	Dave Koenig	Michael Swanson
	Jim Langus	Erica Temple
	Jo Metzger-Levin	Michael Trujillo
	Tom Norcott	Walter White
	Clair Olivers	Mark Nesse
Excused Members	Christopher Adams	
Guests	Thom Graafstra	
City Staff	City Attorney: Jim Iles	Admin: Lisa Harrison

1. Call to order

Chair Shockey explained that there is no public hearing scheduled today, even though a guest commentary in The Daily Herald may have left that perception. He outlined a decision schedule that will include the date of the committee’s second public hearing.

- Shockey clarified that the 4/14 meeting has been set aside for a roundtable discussion among the members. Once the committee gets through the scheduled items, if there is time toward the end of the meeting that time will be made available for public comments. He reiterated that citizens can also submit emails to the city or post comments on the website.
- Shockey stated a proposed schedule to the committee members. He asked them all to look at the proposed meeting schedule and comment.

Committee member Battuello stated that the published agenda shows that public comments would be heard. Shockey replied that this would be not related to districting, which would happen later but it is up to the committee.

She asked whether they be ready to adopt a report by 5/19. Discussion took place as to when a vote was considered final and if the committee can revisit votes after the public hearing. The committee agreed that that they would compile the report with their votes on



all of the issues, which would be available to the public before the public hearing. At that point if someone brings up an issue with some new thoughts the committee should be able to revisit.

2. The April 7th meeting minutes were approved unanimously with amendments (section 7, strike written opinions from the comment).

3. Comments from the public

Bob Overstreet, 1717 Rockefeller, stated that districting is necessary and has been for years so that there is representation for all corners of the City. Yakima is an example, where over 40% of citizens were Hispanic and never had a representative. Last year two were elected because they had districting in place. Overstreet commented that at one point this came up with the City Council and at that time 6 of the 7 council members were from Northwest Everett. Districting was voted down by the council, which was one of the reasons why they formed the neighborhood associations. "I can't urge you more strongly to accept a scheme that includes districting for Everett," Overstreet said.

Greg Lineberry, 3827 Kromer, stated "I'm also for districting and want to point out that the how-to is above and beyond what this committee should have to handle." He recommended that they put districting on the ballot, but have a separate committee assigned to draw district lines.

4. Continued discussion regarding City Council districting

Jim Iles reported that he looked into whether any complaints had been filed with the city regarding lack of fair representation in city elections. None were found.

a. Council Member Swanson presents on advantages of maintaining an at-large council

Swanson presented a report on his rationale for maintaining at-large voting in City Council elections. Key points of his presentation:

- 1) Districting would reduce choices for all Everett voters.
- 2) The current system already supports diversity. City has a history of electing people from all corners of the city.
- 3) South Everett already has an electoral advantage based on the number of registered voters south of 41st Street (66% of all voters). A candidate from south Everett would seem to have an advantage. Everett voters have shown that they care about much more than where candidates reside.



- 4) Voters consider many factors when voting. Geographic diversity is only one aspect. Districting mandates geography as an overriding priority.
- 5) Districting would narrow the focus of council members. The current at-large system allows council members to take a citywide view of issues, whereas districting would narrow their view. It is important to keep council members “politically dependent” on votes from all areas of the city.
- 6) Districting would not reduce the fund-raising barrier. It is difficult to scale back a lot of campaign investments to one area of the City of Everett.
- 7) Current system allows for equitable allocation of resources throughout the city. The city has grown to the south, as this was only area for growth. Infrastructure has been added as needed.
- 8) Gerrymandering: district lines can be moved to favor certain districts. How do we protect against this? Who will draw the lines and how can we ensure that this will not be driven by politics?
- 9) Everett is not equal to Yakima, Tacoma or Seattle. In Everett there is no evidence that anyone has ever been denied a seat on the council due to where they live or their racial heritage.
- 10) At-large council elections are common for cities of Everett’s size. We are in line from both a national and state perspective. For medium cities, 44% have districting. In line with similarly sized cities in the state of Washington.

**b. Megan Dunn summarized her key points in favor of districting:**

- Last week we were asked what the problem is we are trying to solve. Her answer is that “We have an undemocratic voting system that disenfranchises voters and has contributed to division and apathy across the city.” Our current system is outdated and we shouldn’t spend taxpayer dollars defending this outdated system.
- Two main advantages are better representation and more involvement in the city. To the candidates it removes barriers to election and increases accountability for their neighbors. Three Charter Review Committee members are here because of their neighbors; that’s how things work.
- After Drew Nielsen passed away, there were 3 appointments of council members in 4 years and we had the “Anderson Uprising.” Several women and people of color up for appointments that ended up going to a white male. Part of the reason we have a concentration of power in the north is because of those appointments.
- This is something that has been discussed over the last 20 years and it’s an issue whose time has come. Seven out of 10 first class cities are using districting.
- 41st Street should not be the dividing line since the majority of the population lives south of there. We can’t really compare south to north this way.
- The majority of the public comments have been for district voting. In your packet today you received a letter from Brian Sullivan, John McCoy, Mike Sells and June Robinson who represent Everett at the county and state level in support of districting.
- Everett is unique: We have higher crime, more renters, lower incomes, etc. in Everett than the rest of the county so we need more involvement throughout the city.
- Dunn supported that she feels the city is ready and is prepared to offer her services to be part of a citizen’s committee to bring it to the general election.
- Asked the ACLU for a statement around district voting for Everett. ACLU stated that they are committed to ensuring political fairness for diverse voices.
- Gerrymandering is not a concern. Districting would be based on state law, which states district boundaries should be based on proportion of the population.

c. Each committee member to state their position, continue discussion regarding districting pros and cons for Everett

- 1) Reid Shockey: I think it is a bona fide issue that deserves to move forward. The City Council is looking for this committee to make a recommendation on this. I think we



should allow the citizens a vote on what they think should happen. If we decide not to put it on the ballot, then this issue will continue to fester. If we put it to a vote and it is voted down, at least we can say the people have had a choice. I propose 3 at-large and 4 district positions. A commission should be formed if it is voted in to develop the district boundaries. They would be developed based on population, geographically contiguous, etc.

- I want to get past this opinion that 41st street is the dividing line. It should be farther south so as to be fair to those in the most southerly neighborhoods.
- 2) Terri Battuello: From the beginning we talked about approaching this from the standpoint “If it’s not broke, don’t fix it.” I don’t think having a low barrier to being on the city council is a good thing. The 3 women on the council are good examples that there isn’t currently a problem. I come from a city of 9 districts and found that it was very political, difficult to get people to make decisions. While I agree with the values stated by the people who have brought districting forward, I think that we should cultivate the pool of candidates but keep it at-large. We are advisors and we need to keep in mind that we do not make the call as to whether or not it is on the ballot, that is the council and mayor’s decision.
 - 3) Mark Nesse: I’ve lived in North Everett for many years and have yet to see the south being overlooked. We have built schools and streets, other improvements there for years. I fear that districting will become very political and undo what’s working now.
 - 4) Walter White: I live in South Everett and originally Silver Lake was not part of the city of Everett. We got that area annexed into the city. After being annexed, we got much better services. I’ve never seen any issues being from South Everett. Things get taken care of by the city whenever things come up. I understand the intent of doing districts but I don’t see the need for it. I think the city should put more effort into determining what the growth plan is. I don’t like the idea that people will make decisions based on their neighborhood need versus the general city.
 - 5) Clair Olivers: It could be that the reason service is so good in south Everett is that you have one executive saying to serve everyone rather than different factions that have specific council members assigned from different areas.
 - 6) Jo Metzger-Levin: I’ve been on a lot of city and county boards and committees and we have tried very hard to get people from South Everett and of different diverse groups and we cannot get them to participate. We need to recruit these people to



serve on boards, etc., to get them to understand what the city government is all about before they run for council.

- 7) Erica Temple: Most of us came into this knowing that districting was an issue but I don't see that the South is disenfranchised...they have the votes to win if they had a candidate to support. I don't see the problem, but it may be that the voters should be given the opportunity to vote.
- 8) Michael Trujillo: I represent two neighborhoods in the south. I think it's real important that we accept the task to make a recommendation to the council that they need to think about and act on. I agree with Reid's suggestion. Make the recommendation and put it on the City Council.
- 9) Tom Norcott: I have lived in a number of states and cities and I've seen both systems. Some have worked and some haven't. I have lived in the city for 32 years and I don't feel like I've ever been under-represented or seen a compelling gap in government representation. I am concerned about silos with districting. I really appreciate all of the work that has been done around this. I'm not sure districting would encourage more voters to vote and I don't see a compelling problem.
- 10) Jim Langus: I don't believe going to the district system is the right answer for Everett. I don't believe we are in a situation with a problem and for all of the points Michael Swanson brought up think we should stay with the at-large system. Our elected officials really look at the city in its entirety.

Discussion took place as to whether they should vote now. What is the purpose of the public hearing? Is it to share our report or is it to get more input prior to our final recommendations?

Per Attorney Iles, in accordance with the resolution you are to take votes, listen to public input and it is your choice to revise decisions if desired. The committee should proceed to vote and keep making progress. Honor what is in the resolution so that final decisions can be made after the public input.

Shockey clarified that depending on the vote, the minority and majority reports would be developed. They would use Megan's and Michael's reports for those opinions.

The motion was made to recommend to the council that a system of districting be amended into the Charter section 2.1 be amended to create districts and a committee of people to create and review with district boundaries to move forward to the voters.



Vote: 3 yes, 11 no (not passed). Voting in favor: Dunn, Shockey, Trujillo. Voting against: Battuello, Koenig, Langus, Metzger-Levin, Nesse, Norcott, Olivers, Sievers, Swanson, Temple, White.

Chair Shockey asked the Committee Members to be prepared to respond to the schedule he issued.

4. Public comments

Deb Williams, P.O. box 12893 South Everett, thanked them for their work and stated that it has been an interesting, thoughtful discussion.

5. Date and topics for next meeting 4/07/2016

Tom Norcott and Megan Dunn will not be in attendance next week.

Note: Meeting on April 21 will be in the 10th floor, Mayor's Conference Room

The meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m.