

1 Christie Bell, Bellingham Senior Activity Center Manager, submitted a handout (*on*
2 *file*) and spoke about the Council on Aging contract with the County.

3
4 Bob Burr spoke about term limits.

5
6 Mike Cohen, Bellingham Food Bank, spoke about the proposed amendment to limit
7 the County's ability to contract with nonprofit organizations.

8
9 Gary Lysne spoke about term limits and district-only voting.

10
11 Karl Uppiano submitted a handout (*on file*) and spoke about proposing amendments
12 for the ballot, district-only voting, and adding diversity language to the Charter Preamble.

13
14 Kris Ungern spoke about district-only voting and term limits.

15
16 Larry Quinliven spoke about district-only voting.

17
18 Rud Browne spoke about district-only voting, term limits, and election of the Council
19 at-large position.

20
21 **5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES FOR FEBRUARY 23, 2015**

22
23 Joe Elenbaas moved to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded.

24
25 The motion carried unanimously.

26
27 **6. OLD BUSINESS: DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE VOTE ON PROPOSED CHARTER**
28 **AMENDMENTS FOR VOTERS AT THE NEXT GENERAL ELECTION**

29
30 *The Commission took a break from 7:55 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.*

31
32 Proposed Amendment 2 from Joe Elenbaas: Shall the Charter in Article 5.40 and Article 5.60
33 be amended to increase the "concise statement" limit from 20 words to 40 words?

34
35 Donovan moved to substitute the proposed amendment with language proposed by
36 Auditor Debbie Adelstein to amend Charter sections 5.40 and 5.60, "...The Auditor shall then
37 transmit a copy of the proposal to the Prosecuting Attorney, who within ten (10) days after
38 the receipt thereof, in consultation with the petitioner shall formulate the ballot title which
39 shall consist of: (a) a statement of the subject of the measure; (b) a concise description of
40 the measure; and (c) a question: "Shall this be enacted into law?" The statement of the
41 subject of the measure must be proposed as a positive statement, be sufficiently broad to
42 reflect the subject, and be sufficiently precise to give notice of the measure's subject
43 matter, and not exceed ten words. The concise description must contain no more than
44 thirty words, be a true and impartial description of the measure's essential contents, clearly
45 identify the proposition to be voted on, and not, to the extent reasonably possible, create
46 prejudice either for or against the measure ~~statement, posed as a positive question,~~
47 ~~purpose of the measure~~ Such concise statement will be the ballot title. The petitioner then
48 has one hundred and twenty (120) days..."

49
50 The motion was seconded.

51
52 The motion to substitute and approve carried unanimously, with discussion.

1 Proposed Amendment 3 from Ben Elenbaas: Shall Charter Section 8.20 be amended to
2 prohibit the County Council from proposing Charter amendments on matters that have been
3 approved by a 2/3 majority of voters?

4
5 The motion carried 8-7 with debate, with Donovan, Mackiewicz, May, Mutchler, Ryan,
6 Stuen, and Walker opposed.

7
8 Proposed Amendment 4 from Jon Mutchler: Shall the Charter Preamble be amended to
9 affirm the diversity of our citizens?

10
11 Mutchler moved to table items four and six until after the Commission discusses item
12 seven. The motion was seconded.

13
14 The motion to table carried 14-0-1 with Joe Elenbaas abstaining.

15
16 Proposed Amendment 7 from Yvonne Goldsmith: Shall the County Charter prohibit grants
17 and expenditures to non-profit organizations unless the County is reimbursed by another
18 organization or jurisdiction?

19
20 Kentch moved to postpone to the next meeting.

21
22 Donovan moved to end debate and call the question. The motion was seconded.

23
24 The motion to end debate and call the question carried unanimously with no debate.

25
26 The motion to approve the proposed amendment failed 2-12-1 with Kentch and
27 Langley in favor and Joe Elenbaas abstaining.

28
29 Proposed Amendment 4 from Jon Mutchler: Shall the Charter Preamble be amended to
30 affirm the diversity of our citizens?

31
32 Donovan moved to table to the next meeting. The motion was seconded.

33
34 The motion to table carried 10-5 with Sobjack, Ben Elenbaas, Langley, Goldsmith,
35 and Joe Elenbaas opposed.

36
37 Proposed Amendment 6 from Ken Bell: Shall the Charter be amended to apply term limits to
38 the County Councilmembers, Executive, Auditor, Treasurer, Assessor, and Sheriff?

39
40 Donovan moved to amend to remove term limits on the executive offices. The
41 motion was seconded.

42
43 Ben Elenbaas stated the motion is for a proposed change to Charter section 2.14, "The
44 term of office of each elected councilmember shall be four (4) years commencing with the
45 second Monday in January following election, and until a successor has been elected and
46 has qualified. Elected councilmembers shall serve no more than two consecutive terms in
47 office. Terms are considered consecutive unless they are at least four years apart."

48
49 The motion to amend carried 10-2-3 with debate, with Elenbaas and Stuen opposed
50 and May, Mutchler, and Walker abstaining.

51
52 Donovan moved to amend to specify that term limits will apply only to those terms
53 that are elected after the voters adopt term limits. Term limits are not retroactive to terms

1 already served. For example, if a person has already served four terms, those four terms
2 would not count for the purpose of term limits. The motion was seconded.

3
4 The motion to amend to make term limits not retroactive carried 13-2 with debate,
5 with Ben Elenbaas and Joe Elebaas opposed.

6
7 Mutchler moved to amend to allow a three-term limit instead of two terms. The
8 motion was seconded.

9
10 The motion to approve a three-term limit carried 9-6 with Bell, Dow, Goldsmith,
11 Kentch, Langley, and Sobjack opposed.

12
13 The motion to approve as amended carried 9-5-1 with debate, with Joe Elenbaas,
14 May, Ryan, Stuen, and Walker opposed and Mutchler abstaining.

15
16 Proposed Amendment 8 from Jon Mutchler: Shall the Charter be amended to provide voter
17 education concerning county officials' election titles by requiring ballots to refer to the
18 Assessor as the "Property Assessor" and the Auditor as the "Auditor and Elections Officer"?

19
20 The Commission did not discuss this item.

21
22 Proposed Amendment 9 from Todd Donovan: Shall the Charter be amended to provide for
23 the election of Councilmembers countywide and by districts from which the candidate was
24 nominated?

25
26 The Commission did not discuss this item.

27
28 Proposed Amendment 10 from Chet Dow: Shall Charter Section 8.23 be amended to
29 prohibit the County Council from proposing any Charter amendment to Charter Sections
30 2.12 or 2.13?

31
32 The Commission did not discuss this item.

33
34 Proposed Amendment 11 from Cliff Langley: Shall the Charter be amended to require that
35 the Councilmember At-Large reside in unincorporated Whatcom County and be elected by
36 unincorporated county voters?

37
38 The Commission did not discuss this item.

39
40 **7. OLD BUSINESS: COMMISSION-APPROVED CHARTER AMENDMENTS**

41 *The Commission voted to forward these proposed amendments to Whatcom County*
42 *voters. They are not scheduled for discussion at tonight's meeting. However, any*
43 *commissioner may move to reconsider these amendments during any meeting.*

- 44
45 • Proposed Amendment 1 from Joe Elenbaas: Shall the Charter be amended to
46 provide for election of council members within the council district from which the
47 candidate was nominated?
48
49 • Proposed Amendment 5 from Todd Donovan: Shall the Charter be amended to
50 facilitate voting on initiative and referendum?

51
52 **8. NEW BUSINESS**
53

1 Motion to begin Charter Review Commission meetings with prayer

2
3 This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

4
5 **9. ADJOURN**

6
7 Joe Elenbaas moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded.

8
9 The motion carried unanimously.

10
11 The meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

12
13 The Commission approved these minutes on March 23, 2015

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20 
21 Jill Nixon, Recording Secretary

22
23
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25
26 
Chet Dow, Commission Secretary


Ben Elenbaas, Commission Chair