



Office of Community Involvement



Multnomah County Charter Review Committee

February 16, 2022 5:30-7:30pm

COMMITTEE MEETING 8

Purpose: Hear public comment; discuss personal and committee values; set groundwork for subcommittee work plan going forward.

Attendees

Committee Members

- Ana del Rocío (she/her)
- Annie Kallen (she/her)
- Ana González Muñoz (she/ella)
- Danica Leung (she/her)
- Donovan Scribes (he/him)
- Georgina Miltenberger (she/her)
- J'reyesha Brannon (she/her)
- Jude Perez (they/them)
- Marc Gonzales (he/him)
- Meikelo Cabbage
- Nina Khanjan (she/her)
- Samantha Gladu (she/they)
- Salma Sheikh (she/her)
- Maja Harris (she/her)
- Theresa Mai (she/her)

- Timur Ender (he/him)

Absent:

- Allison Brown (she/her), JLA Public Involvement

Staff:

- Dani Bernstein (they/them), Director of the Office of Community Involvement
- Kali Odell (she/her), Charter Review Committee Program Coordinator
- Katherine Thomas (she/her), Assistant County Attorney
- Ariella Frishberg (she/her), JLA Public Involvement

In addition, members of the public were welcome to observe the meeting as non-participatory attendees. There were two public attendees during the course of the meeting.

Welcome

Ariella Frishberg, JLA Public Involvement, kicked off the meeting with an overview of Zoom logistics and etiquette. The Zoom chat can be found in [Appendix A](#). Theresa Mai gave an overview of the agenda, which included public comment, subcommittee groups, a report out from the Community Engagement Subcommittee,

and a values workshop. Ariella shared the group agreements and asked if any members had questions about them.

Public Comment

Ana del Rocío expressed the committee's excitement to begin listening to public comment. There were two written comments for this meeting, no prior sign up for verbal comments, and one person in attendance who wished to speak to the committee.

Kali Odell, Charter Review Committee Program Coordinator, gave a brief summary of the written comments:

- I've noticed the county has a contract with the city to collect taxes. Shouldn't it be able to do this on its own?
- I was a member of the 2015/16 Charter Review Committee and want to talk about an issue we had with a county manager. The county has a Chief Operating Officer, and that role is a hybrid county manager model. I want to share information about how previous county manager models have worked in the past, and why the committee found that they shouldn't make an amendment for a county manager.

Kali asked the committee if they had any questions or comments about the written comment.

- Ana del Rocio: I read the comments and we should make sure we invite people who will be most impacted by any changes we make to the charter to testify before the committee such as the COO, Commissioners, etc. It's good practice to extend invitations and hear directly from folks. We do hold time in every meeting for verbal public comment.
- Scott (public commenter): I don't know if this is in the scope of the committee, but the Multnomah County Archives has historical records vs. modern records. Could that department be moved under the Multnomah County Library? Their expertise is needed as we move into digitization of these millions of historical records. It would be great if these were digitally accessible, and I think the library is the best way to manage this.

I would like the committee to lead by example in how they request and obtain publicly given Multnomah County emails; that everyone is assigned a public email for the public to know about, and the county would be able to retain all correspondence. This would streamline the public records process.

Ariella asked if the committee had any questions after hearing the public comment.

- Donovan Scribes thanked the public commenters and stated that he felt the public email idea was good, and there were other groups who use that model.
- J'reyesha Brannon expressed support for using the library for historical records and explained that this might be something outside of the direct scope of the committee which could be mentioned, as there is a "library" section.

Subcommittees Report Out

Marc Gonzales led a discussion about the subcommittees.

Subcommittee One:

- Jude Perez said their group met and went over things their subcommittee had been discussing, such as gender-neutral language and prioritizing topics to schedule out more effectively and meet more often.
- Maja Harris mentioned that the Office of Community Involvement has some amendment recommendations for the committee, so the group should hear from them in the future.

Subcommittee Two:

- Donovan: We want to make the most impact and we discussed how to break up research for the meetings, if we are going to recommend a change. We are figuring out interest areas for discussion before referring out to the county. We discussed how often to meet, big picture goals, and how we want to accept comments.
- Nina Khanjan: Yes, we are thinking about meeting twice a month.

Subcommittee Three:

- Annie Kallen: Our group is focused on elections and voting methods. We will meet twice a month and we discussed what kind of guests we would like to invite. We will also look at our values in terms of our reach. We also want to see what the Portland Charter is discussing about these topics and seeing if we can meet with them as well.

Marc asked if the committee had any additional questions or comments after these report outs.

- Donovan: The Portland City Charter put out a community engagement report today and we should look at it.
- Timur Ender: Our Subcommittee Three homework was to view a presentation from More Equitable Democracy that was shown to the City Charter Committee and it was really engaging. It mentioned cities in Europe with populations like Portland having more city councilors. It also discussed how to harness electoral power of minorities. They recommended having an election timed during the general election for more voter engagement, and the benefit of partisan elections at the local level.

The last report out was from the Public Engagement Subcommittee.

- J'reyesha: Our subcommittee has met a couple of times, and we have been discussing graphics that we share with the public. We would like to vote on an authority to design this public engagement process. (The full comment can be found in the chat in [Appendix A](#)). We would like community outreach and content to not have the need for full committee approval. We will collaborate with county staff and regularly report out.
- Maja: We also discussed the names of the committees so that we can differentiate between them. We came up with names that were similar to the initial proposed names: Government Accountability; Safety and Justice; Equitable Representation; and Community Engagement. We will be requesting funding to engage with community organizations for public outreach in several languages. We don't know how much this will be but are hopeful there will be some.

Vote:

Ariella initiated a Fist of 5 temperature check to see how the group felt about moving forward with the suggested names, and the group was in agreement. She then initiated a vote to confirm the new names.

All members present voted to confirm changing the subcommittee names to Government Accountability; Safety and Justice; Equitable Representation; and Community Engagement.

Vote

Ariella initiated another Fist of 5 temperature check to see how the group felt about voting about granting more authority to the Community Engagement Subcommittee moving forward, and the group supported the move. Another vote was initiated to approve the request of the Community Engagement Subcommittee.

All members present voted to confirm the authority for the Community Engagement Subcommittee, based on the following request from the subcommittee: *We request the authority to design the public engagement process and content, including developing methods of community outreach, without the ongoing need for full committee approval. We will collaborate with County staff and regularly report out to the full committee and welcome the input of the full committee.*

The group then took a short break.

Values Workshop

Ana del Rocío introduced the values workshop. The goal was to get a better sense of the MCCRC members' values as individuals and representatives of the community. This will act as a filter to guide future decisions and discussions the committee may have in how to engage with recommendations to change the charter. The group worked together on a whiteboard to share their ideas. A pdf of the final whiteboard can be [found here](#).

Ariella quickly reviewed definitions for vision, mission, values, and outcomes. Once the group shares their values, the tri-chairs will use those to build a framework that can be used to assess proposed amendments to the Charter. She asked if the group had any questions.

- Annie Kallen: This makes sense, but I was thinking more about the values for our County. The values for us are different from the ones we want to apply to the Charter, so I'm feeling a little disconnect there.
 - Ariella: Today we are returning to the shared values of the group and the shared values of the communities you are representing. The tri-chairs will use these to develop a framework for evaluating proposed solutions, and subcommittees will be able to adapt that as they need.
- Theresa Mai: We thought this framework could help make the ballot measure process less stressful, as we are on a tight timeline. We understand that everyone is coming together and sharing ideas through their own lived experiences, and this could help guide us through what ideas we want to work with. This will clarify our values.

The next part of the workshop focused on the committees' shared values as individuals and representatives of the community. The tri-chairs would take the list of values to develop a draft evaluation framework that can be used to assess the proposals that come out of the subcommittee work. The tri-chairs shared a few initial examples to help get the conversation started.

- Ana del Rocío: These are broad ideas that are important to me and my community, and they help guide decisions in my life. It's not common to have government conversations begin with values-led exercises, and it becomes more important when we bring diverse groups together with different lived

experiences. Values weren't always so transparent or shared before because they were simply assumed.

- Theresa: If I look at democracy, I think about the voting process, and how accessible it is, so that is something else to think about.

The group spent time adding values that were important to them and their communities to the whiteboard. Refer to the [full PDF](#) of the whiteboard to see what was written.

Discussion

Ariella asked the group if there were any questions or reactions to the shared values on the whiteboard, and there were none. She led the group through a discussion on whether the current charter reflected the values that were just discussed.

- Jude: I think it's important to make sure we are clear and accessible for all people to understand what we are talking about, especially with legal speak. We don't want to exclude anyone from the discussion because they don't understand what we are talking about.
- Georgina Miltenberger: The trend toward plain language in law is a good thing. It should be more accessible and less complicated. We should apply this to the charter as well.
- Maja: The accessibility piece is missing in the charter, and I understand that some of it is for legal purposes, but I agree we should be accessible. You see the community engagement within the Charter, but what you don't see is who made changes, who discussed them, or what community engagement there was. I think our Charter committee is changing that by being more inclusive and getting more input from a wider portion of the community. It would be great if there was a version of the Charter that was in plain English.
- Ariella: I wonder if there could be an annotated Charter?
- Ana Del Rocío: Previous charters were pretty formal. I like the idea of an annotated Charter. I also think if one of our values is innovation, we should figure out what options we have, such as multimedia, to make it more accessible.
- Georgina: I think that's a great idea.
- Salma Sheikh: Is the Charter translated into other languages?
 - Kali: I need to look into that and get back to you. It's not posted in the area we post the Charter in English.
- Georgina: I sit on another board and we have recently provided a link to be translated into different languages. It was relatively low cost and provided the tool people needed.
- Timur: At the end of this, we are going to have something that goes to voters, and we aren't going to be able to do this ourselves. The more accessible we can be, the more engagement and help we can get.
- Marc: It's our responsibility to show the effect for whatever changes are proposed.
- Scott (member of the public – in the chat): Why does the charter only review every six years? Could it be a permanent committee with revolving members?
 - J'reyesha: That's one of those "think outside of the box" system changes. Why can't we have our Charter at the same time as the Portland Charter? Their time is 10 years and ours is 6, which seems way too long. Maybe we can make some modifications.

- Maja: The subcommittee that deals with government processes is going to look at the Charter review process. If Scott is interested, he can always attend a subcommittee meeting and talk with us.

Ariella then asked the committee if the Charter is doing a good job of reflecting the values that are important to the group.

- Annie: Even though there is legal speak which could be improved, the Charter still feels relatively succinct. I think it can be improved, but we are getting there.
- Maja: I think it reflects generations of values, like trying to be accountable and balance power, so I get the sense from the document that it is well intended, but as society changes, our checks and balances also need to change. It should be a living document with plenty of context that reflects our history and culture over many years.
- Donovan: Is it mandated for the Charter to be called “the Charter,” or could we call it the “constitution?” I didn’t know there was a localized constitution until recently and I think changing the language saves us from having to explain to people and will help with engagement.
 - Katherine: The word “charter” comes from the state constitution, and I’m happy to look into that question and answer it later.

Ariella asked if there was anyone who would like to share something who hadn’t had an opportunity to do so yet.

- Nina Khanjan: When thinking about the more accessible language piece, I keep thinking of the word “bold”. When we talk in our subcommittees, we were discussing how to make bold changes. I think making small changes and fitting in the legal terms takes away from the ability to be bolder in making changes.
- Meikelo Cabbage: At the end of the day, we are going to have to refer our proposals to commissioners and voters, so if we are going to make bold changes to the Charter, they will need to be popular. We need to keep that in mind. It’s a democratic process and we have to work with what we’ve got.
- Marc: Bookmark for the future to make the Charter more accessible, in different languages, and with a video.
- Theresa: I really appreciate this conversation and thank everyone for being so involved in it,
- Marc: I also appreciate this conversation and think we have some sidebars on what we’re able to do, but we should push against that until we get something we are proud of.
- Ana del Rocío: As we get prepared to present to the board, and voters thereafter, it’s going to be great to have this set of values to go back to. I appreciate everyone being vulnerable in sharing their set of values and look forward to our tri-chair consultation before we give a summary.

Next Steps and Closing

Ariella wrapped up the meeting and thanked everyone for their patience. She added that the whiteboard would be closed at the end of the meeting.

- Kali: Now that you all are in subcommittees, I want it to be easier for you to hand things off to me, so I’m going to create individual folders that you can upload things to, and that will streamline how we move through the public records process. When sharing resources with each other, please share those

with me, and I can make a bibliography for each subcommittee so the public can also follow along and read them.

- The next meeting will be on March 16, 2022.

Zoom chat: Appendix A

Scott: I have a public comment by phone, please.

Kali Odell (she/her): <https://www.multco.us/crc/mccrc-meeting-records>

Samantha Gladu (she/they): Thank you for being here, and for your recommendations, Scott!

Scott: Thank you for your time.

Scott: Mr. Scribes, thanks you for pointing out that Portland assigns email addresses to thier Charter Review committee members. I would like Multnomah County email addresses also assigned to all members of this MultCo Charter Review Committee as well- a soon as possible.

Katherine Thomas (she/her): For all subcommittees, feel free to work with Kali on reaching out to our office with legal questions as they arise.

Samantha Gladu (she/they): Thank you Timur, for lifting that up. Love to learn about democracy with you

Donovan Scribes (he/him): Sure thing Scott.

Kali Odell (she/her): We request the authority to design the public engagement process and content, including developing methods of community outreach, without the ongoing need for full committee approval. We will collaborate with County staff and regularly report out to the full committee and welcome the input of the full committee.

Scott: Make a motion, get a second... then vote

Annie Kallen she/her: I will be right back.

Maja Harris (she/her): Proposed committee names: Government Accountability, Safety & Justice, Equitable Representation, Community Engagement

Timur Ender (he/they): <https://www.portland.gov/omf/charter-review-commission/events/2021/9/23/charter-commission-meeting-w-public-comment>

Presentation starts at 28:30. Its such a rich presentation; I enjoyed every minute of it! It really gets at the best practices I was seeking to understand as it relates to what I've been calling "equitable apportionment"

Jude (they/them): Thanks Timur!

Donovan Scribes (he/him): Here is that city of Portland charter report I'd referenced earlier:

<https://www.portland.gov/omf/charter-review-commission/news/2022/2/15/charter-commission-progress-report-1>

Georgina Miltenberger: 5

Danica Leung: 5

Meikelo Cabbage: 5

Kali Odell (she/her): We request the authority to design the public engagement process and content, including developing methods of community outreach, without the ongoing need for full committee approval. We will collaborate with County staff and regularly report out to the full committee and welcome the input of the full committee.

Georgina Miltenberger: 5

Meikelo Cabbage: 5

Ariella Frishberg, she/her, facilitator: https://lucid.app/lucidspark/24e00949-78b5-4cc8-99bf-59c697b93300/edit?invitationId=inv_22e0f0a8-3978-4dc5-ad35-a385cf64b253

Samantha Gladu (she/they): I'm back!

J'reyesha Brannon: back

Ana del Rocio (she/her): Back!

Meikelo Cabbage: im back!

Danica Leung: back

Nina Khanjan: I'm here

Georgina Miltenberger: I'm back!

Ana Gonzalez Munoz: Will be eating too.

Danica Leung: Apologize if I missed this but how do I access this link?

Ariella Frishberg, she/her, facilitator: https://lucid.app/lucidspark/24e00949-78b5-4cc8-99bf-59c697b93300/edit?invitationId=inv_22e0f0a8-3978-4dc5-ad35-a385cf64b253

Danica Leung: Got it, thank you!

Nina Khanjan: Thanks! I'm Struggling here, lol. I was trying to put integrity and follow through.

Theresa Mai (she/her): I'll put it on there for you, Nina!

Marc Gonzales: Could not make the post-its work, but have worked at various levels and experienced working up and supporting others

Theresa Mai (she/her): I'll put it on there for you too, Marc!

Kali Odell (she/her): If anyone is having difficulty posting, put things in the chat and I will add it to the board

Ana del Rocio (she/her): If anyone gets stuck or wants ideas: <https://www.berkeleywellbeing.com/core-values.html>

Marc Gonzales: full participation

Ana Gonzalez Munoz: Some of my values: Respect, Acceptance, & Tolerance

Marc Gonzales: Donation of Skills to others

Nina Khanjan: Empathy, flexibility, and pragmatism are key for innovative work to happen.

Ana Gonzalez Munoz: Pride/Orgullo

Georgina Miltenberger: I can't get the white board to work from my device. But I believe that a sense of belonging is key. People invest in their communities when they feel they're truly a part of it. That means they need to see themselves represented in the decision makers.

Ana del Rocio (she/her): This is so much fun! These values are beautiful

Ana del Rocio (she/her): Yes!

Samantha Gladu (she/they): Hahaha - will try

Danica Leung: LOL

Georgina Miltenberger: Lol!!!

Donovan Scribes (he/him): Prefer to talk with folks on screen

Maja Harris (she/her): Same

Jude (they/them): I don't have a strong opinion.

Timur Ender (he/they): same with Jude

Theresa Mai (she/her): I will try to paste in chat/verbal comments on the whiteboard as we chat!

Marc Gonzales: I agree with Donovan and Maia

Scott: People

Ana del Rocio (she/her): Agreed. My read of the charter was that it embodied order, formality, law/legal speak, perhaps tradition

Jude (they/them): Agreed

Donovan Scribes (he/him): That's major if not Salma!

Jude (they/them): ^Yes!

Ana del Rocio (she/her): Definitely eye-opening if it's currently English-only

J'reyesha Brannon: The translation is huge. Let's definitely push to make sure that's done

Scott: The Multnomah County Charter is the County's "Constitution" - question: why do we citizens only "review" it every 6 years? Can this Charter Review Committee make it Every 2 years and that this Committee be a permanent Committee with revolving members?

Ariella Frishberg, she/her: that would be the newly named "government accountability" subcommittee!

Scott: A permanent Charter Committee increases the member Experience, unlimited timelines, and supports ongoing public interaction and support of their Democracy.

Scott: You have the power to refer this to the voters for approval.

Annie Kallen she/her: Great point, Donovan!

Timur Ender (he/they): When I talk to my friends about my role here, I refer to it as the "county constitution". good point.

Theresa Mai (she/her): Same, Timur. Good point, Donovan.

Scott: You have the Multnomah County Attorneys can give your Committee a WRITTEN response.

Scott: in writing.

Timur Ender (he/they): bookmark for future: we could have the final report translated to make it accessible and we could produce a short video explaining what the charter is and a short summary of changes proposed going to voters.

J'reyesha Brannon: ^ good idea Timur

Jude (they/them): I like that idea

Scott: Does the Multnomah County Commissioners have amVETO?

Scott: A veto of the Committee proposals?

Ana del Rocio (she/her): Would be great to get budget allocation info from staff re: video production costs

J'reyesha Brannon: I don't believe so. That's what's different with our charter committee compared to Portland's

Scott: please, get those email from the County

Scott: emails assigned to all by the county

Scott: Define those "side bars" Marc

Scott: Please, post this chat to the Charter Cmte website.

Annie Kallen she/her: Thanks Ariella!

Marc Gonzales: Many thanks to you, Ariella!

Scott: Thanks Ariella and Charter Committee members. Good night.

Theresa Mai (she/her): Thank you, Scott and Carol, for chiming in!

Scott: NOTE*** Kali will make a "Google folder" for Charter Committee members as an option for public records (in the next couple of days)

Timur Ender (he/they): great facilitation and leadership of today's meeting. Thanks everyone.

Scott: public records

Samantha Gladu (she/they): Thanks all!

Maja Harris (she/her): Thanks everyone!