

Clearwater, Florida, May 8, 2006

The Pinellas County Charter Review Commission (CRC) (as created by Chapter 80-950, Laws of Florida) conducted a public information meeting in the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council Conference Room, Suite 100, 4000 Gateway Centre Boulevard, Pinellas Park at 6:01 P.M. on this date with the following members in attendance:

Alan Bomstein, Chairman
Jim Sebesta, State Senator
Susan Latvala, County Commissioner
John Bryan, City of St. Petersburg Councilmember
Karen Burns
Katie Cole
Robert C. Decker
Sallie Parks
Roger Wilson

Absent:

Ricardo Davis, Vice-Chairman
George Jirotko, Circuit Court Judge
James F. Coats, Sheriff
Louis Kwall

Also Present:

Susan H. Churuti, County Attorney
Kurt Spitzer, KS&A
Other interested individuals
Arlene Smitke, Deputy Clerk

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. Approval of Minutes
3. Review of the Pinellas County Charter
4. Review of the Proposals of the CRC
5. Public Comment
6. Other Business
7. Adjourn

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WELCOME

Chairman Bomstein called the meeting to order; whereupon, he welcomed Senator Sebesta back from the legislative session in Tallahassee and Karen Burns, who has also been traveling.

MINUTES OF MEETING OF APRIL 24, 2006 – APPROVED

Upon presentation of the minutes of the meeting of April 24, 2006, Councilmember Bryan moved, seconded by Commissioner Latvala and carried, that the minutes be approved as submitted.

REVIEW OF PINELLAS COUNTY CHARTER

Mr. Spitzer explained that Pinellas County has a limited home rule charter which has been in existence since 1968, when the voters amended the Florida Constitution to authorize home rule for city and county governments; and that charter counties have all powers of self government that are not inconsistent with general law or special law which has been approved by a vote of the electorate. He provided examples of issues that can be addressed by the charter, explained the manner in which it can be amended, and emphasized that charters are not adopted by the Legislative Delegation or the Board of County Commissioners, but by the public.

Referring to the 2004 CRC, Mr. Spitzer indicated that it had made five recommendations which appeared on the November ballot; that three amendments were adopted and one failed; and that pursuant to confirmation by the electorate, the CRC was extended through November of 2006. He related that the Commission is currently proposing seven Charter Amendments and one Special Act, copies of which have been filed and made a part of the record.

REVIEW OF THE PROPOSALS OF THE CRC

Referring to Proposed Amendment No. 1, Attorney Churuti explained that the Mosquito Control Authority and Water and Navigation Control Authority were established by Special Act; that the CRC is proposing that their governance be transferred from state law to charter authority; and that no changes to the powers or duties of the Authorities are recommended.

Mr. Spitzer reviewed the proposed general charter amendments, indicating that No. 2 corrects gender references and codifies current practice regarding employment authority

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of the County Administrator; and that No. 3 pertains to future CRCs, extending the term, reducing the frequency, permitting employment of independent staff and experts, prohibiting elected officials or government employees from serving on the Commission, and requiring that a minimum of two public hearings be held for any proposed amendments.

Mr. Spitzer related that Proposed Amendment No. 4 would eliminate the dual-vote requirement for amendments to set standards or establish policies on a countywide basis, where the dual vote is not specifically required by the Florida Constitution. He noted that there is a constitutional requirement for a dual vote whenever a proposed amendment would seek to transfer a function or power, such as the transfer of a police department, which cannot be changed by a charter amendment. He stated that the ability to propose amendments that set standards on a countywide basis is not required by the constitution to have a dual vote.

Thereupon, Attorney Churuti reviewed the provisions of Proposed Amendments No. 5, 6, and 7 which pertain to annexation procedures regarding notice, incentives and consent; and related that the CRC is recommending a Special Act amending the Pinellas County home rule charter to provide for local power to repeal the entire charter, subject to referendum.

PUBLIC COMMENT

In response to Chairman Bomstein's call for persons wishing to be heard, the following individuals appeared and stated their concerns. Mr. Spitzer, Attorney Churuti, and Chairman Bomstein provided input for clarification of the issues.

Anne Brooks, Clearwater, and Lynn Gibson, unincorporated Pinellas County, re Pinellas County License Board for Children's Centers and Family Child Care Homes (Ms. Brooks submitted a written statement, which has been filed and made a part of the record.)

Tom Brobeil, City of Gulfport, re Proposed Amendment No. 4

Michael Kouskoutis, Tarpon Springs, re Proposed Amendment No. 4

John Hubbard, Esquire, representing the Cities of Gulfport, Oldsmar, and St. Pete Beach, re Proposed Amendment No. 4

James L. Yacavone, Esquire, representing the City of Tarpon Springs, re Proposed Amendment No. 4

Pam Akin, Esquire, representing the City of Clearwater, re Proposed Amendments Nos. 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7

Martha J. Boos, Madeira Beach, re Proposed Amendments Nos. 2, 3 and 4, and Proposed Special Act

Scott McGuff, Fire Chief, City of Oldsmar, re Proposed Amendment No. 4

Tom Driscoll, Esquire, representing the Cities of St. Pete Beach and Gulfport, re Proposed Amendment No. 4

Bill Jonson, Clearwater, re Proposed Amendments Nos. 4 and 5

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K. L. Kramer, Pinellas Park, re downsizing county government and Proposed Amendments Nos. 3 and 4

Norman Roche, unincorporated Pinellas County, re Proposed Amendment No. 2
(submitted a written statement, which has been filed and made a part of the record)

OTHER BUSINESS - None

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Bomstein announced that the next public information meeting will be held on Monday, May 22, at the Union Academy Family Center in Tarpon Springs; and that the final meeting will be held on Thursday, June 8, at the St. Petersburg City Council Chambers; whereupon, there being no objection, the meeting was adjourned at 7:19 P.M.