

The first meeting of the Charter Commission was held at 2:30 p.m., March 18th, 1975, in the Conference Room of the Cameron Center, Kahului.

The meeting was chaired by Msgr. Kekumano.

Those present were: Mr. Hideo Abe, Mrs. Janet Rodrigues, Mr. Alan Sparks, Mr. Joseph Souki, Mr. Catalino Agliam of Lanai, Mrs. Colin Cameron, Mr. Lloyd Sedetani, Mrs. Edwina Bright, Mr. Ralph Murakami and Mrs. Douglas Kimura, recording secretary.

A - The Chairman urged all Commissioners to become fully acquainted with the present (1969) Maui County Charter and also with the report of the 1974 Charter Review Committee. He also suggested that the Commissioners try to understand the over-all governance of the County and therefore look at the structure of the administration of County government.

The Chairman noted the provisions of the present Charter, section 14 #3 regarding the appointment and obligations of the Charter Commission. He also called attention to the Findings (pg.25) of the recent Charter Review Committee.

Board discussion was held on some Charter questions.

1. The Constitutional legalities of one-man, one-vote type of government (district representation vs. at-large).
2. To study the "Strong Mayor" vs "Weak Mayor" form of government; one form to be considered; a City Manager.
3. To recommend revisions of the Charter as needed to effect the changes. The Msgr. read from Page 4, section 1 of the Charter Review Report of 1974, and then stated that he thought the "key questions" were the ones to be considered first... the question of direct involvement of the Mayor with the Commissions and Departments as opposed to the only indirect involvement. This, for one, should be more explicitly stated in the Charter. This revision would also research and recommend either a "Weak Mayor or Strong Mayor" form of government... one aspect of the latter would be to have an Assistant to the Mayor, leaving the Mayor free to be Chairman of the Council, taking part in their decisions. There was a discussion regarding the duties of the Mayor as now stated... "exercise supervision over all departments, provide coordination and see that they are properly conducted". To this end the Mayor is automatically a member of each board and commission, but has no vote. This is to enable him to be aware of the activities of these bodies, and to cooperate, but he has no authority over their actions.

The discussion went on to an alternate arrangement. Should the Mayor have a more direct involvement with the Police Dept., etc., or should they be run only by the independent committees and commissions. As of now, who are the staff of these departments and commissions answerable and responsible to?

How much time is devoted to their duties by the Heads of the departments, and how much authority is delegated to the staffs of the departments? How much authority does the Mayor and/or the commissions and Heads of departments really have?

Mrs. Cameron asked what duties would the Mayor have, if he has an Assistant carry out his current duties.

The Chairman stated that the Mayor could either be a "figurehead Mayor" or move into the Council and be more effective by having more to do with the decisions made there. As of now, the Mayor has to wait until the Council advises him of their decisions, and this slows down administration. As a member of the Council, the administration could possibly be carried out more efficiently.

J. Souki suggested they contact the City Manager in Honolulu, the job description being very much the same as being considered here.

The Chairman said that the City Manager would be running the City, the Mayor makes the decisions, along with the Council... the Manager only makes decisions in the event of the absence of the Mayor.

Mr. Sparks stated that there was an evident need to do more research in reading about Model Governments in other areas, and consultation with experts in the field of government. He also wondered if the Assistant to the Mayor could be written into the charter now, without re-writing the Charter.

Mr. Sparks and Mr. Sodetani were appointed as a committee to seek out written materials concerning basic forms of government charters.

Bob Dodge of Honolulu was suggested as a possible source of reference material, as he worked on the Honolulu Charter revision two years ago; Douglas Sodetani was also suggested as a contact, since he served as Chairman of the previous Charter Commission.

It was decided that Msgr. K. check with Mr. Sodetani regarding material available from the last revision, and to investigate the possibility of establishing certain attorneys and/or judges as a source of information and consultation. He is to contact Bob Dodge in Honolulu, and make a report at the next meeting. He will also investigate the resources of the University Library.

Regarding County Council elections, Mrs. Cameron questioned the legality of the present District representation... what does the law allow at this time?

Concerning these County questions, the Chairman suggested Paul Devens as one person to make a presentation of the legalities and possibilities in the area of Council representation etc.

There was a general discussion regarding the availability of retired Judges and/or Lawyers in the field of Constitutional Law... people to be consulted and who would be available for information regarding the Constitution and the changes thereof... the decision was made first to look for Maui attorneys who would be able to serve in a consultant capacity, or a retired Judge. Judge Wirtz, as a former Supreme Court Judge was suggested.

The Chairman suggested the possibility of a "pool" of lawyers to draw from to clarify legal points as needed, or any changes that may be considered.

Mr. Souki suggested choosing a committee to investigate the attorneys available, and report to the Commission. The Chairman said he would explore possibilities of a good legal counselor.

After a discussion about various buildings to be used as office space, Mrs. Cameron volunteered the fact that there was a small office being used part of the time for the Philharmonic Soc., the Japanese Cultural Soc., and the Art Soc., and arrangements could probably be made with them to share the equipment and expenses for part time use of this Committee. She is to contact the various societies for permission.

Mr. Souki suggested also that Paul Mancini be contacted regarding assistance, as he has evinced interest in doing so.

A discussion was held regarding meeting time. The meeting time was changed by unanimous vote to every other Thursday from 4 to 6 p.m., at the Cameron Center. The next meeting will be the 3rd of April.

Meeting adj. 3:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Hope Kimura, Sec. pro tem.