
Economy & Efficiency Commission Presentation

**PRESENTATION OF
George David Kieffer, Chair
City of Los Angeles Charter Reform Commission
June 4, 1997**

Topic: Commission Work Plan

Chairman Abel introduced Mr. Kieffer and welcomed him to the Commission. Mr. Kieffer thanked him and distributed material on the City of Los Angeles Charter Reform Commission (CLACRC), including: biographies of the commissioners, copy of a presentation from their first public hearing, and a draft work plan. He commented that biographies were included to show the level of experience of what he feels is an extraordinary group of individuals.

Overview

- 21 Members Appointed by Council President, City Council, City Attorney, and City Controller
- First Meeting: November 1996
- Created Mission Statement
- National Search for Executive Director
- High Quality Staff in Place
- Work Plan Developed

The Commission's mission statement is short and broad in scope. The following are excerpts is from CLACRC's mission statement:

The goal of the Commission is to present a charter that clearly defines responsibility and accountability while providing the flexibility necessary to a changing society.

We begin with the presumption that nothing is exempt from examination nor immune from reform.

This is the same way the charter review group of 1969 approached the issue. The last fundamental changes to the charter were done in 1925. Since then, there have been numerous attempts to change the charter that have failed. The last effort to reach the voters was after a 1969/1970 Commission. This effort failed because there was no public outreach. The current CLACRC is approaching their work with public process in mind, involving the press, schools, etc. The more this issue is visible to the public, the more likely it is that reform will begin.

The current study groups are:

1. Institutions

- Ask what the problems are
 - What is the proper role of the Mayor?
 - What is the proper role of the City Council?
 - How effectively do citizen commissions provide public input into government decisions?
 - What roles, if any, should the elected officials of the City play in the school system?
 - What has been the experience of other comparable cities?
2. Management
- How effectively does the Charter deal with the delivery of services?
 - How should the Charter deal with City departments?
 - How effective are the City's civil service, pension and personnel systems at both protecting the rights of workers and promoting effective government?
 - What are the financial constraints facing the City, and can the Charter better facilitate dealing with financial issues?
3. Participation
- Should the Charter make provisions for neighborhood government?
 - What powers should neighborhoods have? Should there be advisory councils or councils with formal powers?
 - Does the election system of the city promote participation?
 - Should election dates be changed to coincide with state and national elections?
 - Should the Council be enlarged?

The study groups will try to present the best alternatives in each instances.

Commissioner Stoke asked if their meetings are public. Mr. Kieffer replied that they are covered by the Brown Act and all of their meetings are public. The study group meetings are also public meetings.

Additionally, Tim McOsker, a lawyer and CLACRC Commissioner, will head up the fourth committee, the Legal Advisory Committee. This committee will consist of lawyers who represent cities and are familiar with charters.

4. Legal Advisory Committee
- What is the role of a Charter as an instrument of law?
 - As a matter of form, what is most appropriate for inclusion in the Charter vs. codified and non-codified City ordinances and regulations?
 - What can we learn from other charters in this regard?
 - What duplication exists in the current Charter?
 - What internal or external inconsistency (state or Constitutional law) exists in the Charter?

Research Activities planned by the CLACRC include taking a look at what previous charter reform commissions have done in the past, what other charter reform commissions are doing, and interviewing employees and elected officials, past and present.

The Valley and other areas have made a move toward neighborhood councils. In the 1925 city charter there was a provision permitting the council to create burroughs for the City of Los Angeles. This provision was removed in 1974 and the current commission is trying to determine why.

Outreach Activities

- Public Hearings
- Community Meetings of all Kinds
- Channel 35 broadcast of meetings
- Introductory Pamphlet and Video
- Web Site
- Coordination with traditional and non-traditional media
- Involve schools and other institutions
- Elected Commission

Next public meeting is scheduled for July 2nd in East Los Angeles.

The Commission will be meeting a minimum of once a month as a full commission, hold public hearings once a month, and study groups will meet once a week.

Commissioner Barger asked if there is a preconceived result that the Commission is hoping to achieve. Mr. Kieffer replied there is an end goal in mind to accomplish constructive reform. This is why they are attempting to involve as many as possible, especially the City Council. Mr. Kieffer stated there are 3 categories of changes that need to occur: 1) eliminating or correcting parts of the charter that are out of date, inconsistent, duplicative, or in violation of other laws; 2) addressing specific provisions which need not be in the charter but are contained for political reasons; 3) the fundamental issues the public and others want addressed, such as, local control issues, the Council-Mayor relationship and the management of the city through the Executive Office of the Mayor. It is imperative that these latter issues be addressed.

Chairman Abel stated that Board of Supervisors requested the EEC to do a report on state and local government relations. He informed Mr. Kieffer of the status of the report's recommendations. Chairman Abel stated that the EEC is interested in addressing the CLACRC with the fiscal issues that affect city, county, the school board, etc. The EEC concluded the state-local relationship is dysfunctional, as did the State Constitutional Revision Commission. The dysfunctional relationship is 95% of the problem that the CLACRC will be addressing in the city charter issues. Mr. Kieffer stated that he is interested to see the EEC's report and that he realizes this issue will be a part of their work as well. He welcomed a presentation by the EEC at a study group or commission meeting. The CLACRC also plans to raise issues of governance that are of concern but not related to the charter.

Chairman Abel added that it is important that the City and the County, as well as other cities and counties, speak out with one voice against the debilitating unintended consequences of decisions being made in California as they relate to the constitution and fiscal structure.

Commissioner Stoke asked what the final product of the Commission will be. Mr. Kieffer replied that the CLACRC's final work product are proposed charter changes recommended to the Council to place on the ballot. The Council can place these measures on the ballot, amend the measures and then place them on the ballot, or choose to do nothing with CLACRC's proposed changes. The elected commission's product must go on the ballot within two years after its formation. He believes that having two commissions working toward reform is a positive thing and he foresees the commissions working together.

Vice-Chair Farrar stated that he feels the reason for the problem in this region is that everyone deals with their specific problems in an insular way. Chairperson Abel added that EEC is trying to increase awareness about the effects of the loss of local control and the inability of local government to raise revenues. He asked Mr. Kieffer to raise these issues at the city level and thanked him for taking the time to share with the Commission.

[Return to Top of Presentation](#)

[Return to Agenda](#)



Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration, Room 163, 500 West Temple St.,
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Phone (213) 974-1491 FAX (213) 620-1437 [EMail eecomm@co.la.ca.us](mailto:EEComm@co.la.ca.us)
WEB eec.co.la.ca.us