

CharterReview - Public Contact

From: <jim@insidepublications.com>
To: <CharterReview@cityofsacramento.org>
Date: 11/23/2009 5:04 PM
Subject: Public Contact

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Date	November 23, 2009
Contact Name	Jim Hastings
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Message	<p>Comparison Unfair At the November 3 city council meeting, Mayor Kevin Johnson made some statements and comparisons that need further comment. When Charter Review Committee chairman Bill Edgar concluded his presentation about the committee's recommendation, the mayor asked Edgar if he felt the committee has enough time to do its work. Edgar said no, based upon the fact that other cities have averaged two years to comprehensively review their charters and that his committee has taken less than six months so far. Then the mayor asked Edgar if he knew how long it took the Founding Fathers to write the U.S. Constitution. Edgar demurred. Johnson stated it took three months and 29 days. Johnson's insinuation was that somehow this committee was dragging its feet compared to the speedy work of the authors of the Constitution. The city's charter review website states that as of that council meeting, the committee had met 12 times for approximately three hours each. This totals 36 hours, or less than five days. And this is compared to Johnson's estimate of 119 days. The committee has met for a little more than 4 percent of the time that the founders met. To make the comparison even more absurd, the U.S. Constitution is contained on one side of one sheet of paper. The city's charter is approximately 47 pages long—or approximately 4,700 percent longer. Mr. Mayor, this is not basketball. Changing the city's charter is serious business and deserves an accurate—not a poppycock—comparison when accessing the work of a panel of citizen volunteers evaluating our city's government. After this exchange with the Mayor, Edgar asked if he could ask a question. The Mayor said no because the matter was finished. I called and asked Edgar about his question. He said that he was going to ask the Mayor how much time he had spent in public outreach with his strong-mayor initiative. Since the answer is zero, no wonder the Mayor insisted on the last word.</p>

This message originated at www.cityofsacramento.org/charter/contact.html