

MINUTES OF THE TRI-COUNTY LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSION MEETING

Held: July 15, 1976, 7:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cease, Chairperson, Halvorson, Vice-Chairperson, Bayless, Blunt, Bullier, Burgess, Frewing, Gregory, Jaeger, Keller, Mattersdorf, Mays, McGilvra, Montgomery, Moshofsky, Nightingale, Rieke, Schumacher, Shepherd, Simpson, Snedecor, Sprecher, Stahl, Stevenson, Stuhr, Yost

EXCUSED: Ballin, Coleman, Hammel, Herrell, Hoover, Nees, Opray, Roberts, Schwab, Tippens

STAFF: Rich, Garbutt

GUEST SPEAKER: Howard W. Hallman, President of the Center for Governmental Studies, Inc., Washington, D.C. - member of the National Academy of Public Administration.

Chairperson Cease called the meeting to order and introduced guest speaker, Howard Hallman.

Hallman

The people in the neighborhoods sometimes feel as alienated from local government as many people feel from the Federal government.

I look at neighborhoods as a vital part of the city; they cannot get along without each other. They help build a sense of community.

There were communities before there were governments, and this is an important concept in the American way of life. We need better instruments, whether volunteer or governmental, for the neighborhoods to express themselves.

There are four types of areas which should be examined separately - the response may be different for each: 1) City of Portland, 2) suburban municipalities, 3) suburban areas, and 4) rural areas. We need to ask, "Is there a need for organized government in the small rural areas", and "Should there be service districts or something to give a sense of unity?"

Tri-County Council - In the Tri-County area there are 290 civic associations. Perhaps there could be some annual conference of these groups to compare their concerns.

DISCUSSION:

Frewing asked about the financial arrangements for neighborhood governments.

Hallman: Most of them have staff on the city payroll and work with the city planners. There is beginning to be a flow of general purpose government funds.

Blunt: What types of functions do neighborhood organizations perform?

Hallman: Most of them area advisory, e.g. zoning and planning, youth programs, recreation, beautification, playground supervision and maintenance.

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Hallman - continued

A guest in the audience asked what kind of power neighborhood organizations have.

Hallman: It could be a representative body elected by district or a general assembly with issues settled by majority vote. It is important that it be a government which is under the control of the residents of the area.

Snedecor: What is the ideal size of a neighborhood organization?

Hallman: It depends on the total size of the city. It could be anywhere from 25,000 to 40,000. Studies do not agree on an ideal size.

Yost: Citizen activity might be due to a lack of confidence in government. Neighborhood organizations should be at the initiative of the citizens, not because a study commission decides it is good for them. Do you feel neighborhood organizations should be an integral part of government framework?

Hallman: I would suggest that areas where none exists should be examined, but the decision should be left up to a vote of the people of that area.

Rieke: Is it important to have a planned structure for neighborhoods?

Hallman: I think a suburban area would be better off with a general purpose government which takes care of all the functions rather than separate service districts.

Bayless: Is the activity of the citizen groups a result of model cities legislation?

Hallman: The Portland ordinance was not because of a federal decision, it was because the people felt it was necessary.

Sprecher: What is the percentage of registered voters participating in the town hall meetings?

Hallman: It is probably about 10%. National school boards generally have about 25% turnout.

Stahl: There are problems with having single purpose districts for everything. How can we keep this on a rational basis so the citizen input effort does not become counter productive?

Hallman: In San Diego County the board of supervisors appointed a citizen participation officer to review the whole structure of advisory committees. One of the possibilities she recommended was a plan for the geographic areas as well as consolidation of some of the neighborhoods.

Halvorson: Aren't the smaller suburban cities a neighborhood by themselves?

Hallman: They could be considered such. It is a matter of terminology and what you want to call a "neighborhood". A neighborhood could also be a "district".

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Hallman - continued

Yost: To what extent do neighborhood organizations come together because of one special problem or concern?

Hallman: It is difficult to maintain the interest of the local group without a focal point such as a problem.

A guest in the audience: Do you have any trouble with special interest groups? Who usually wins the conflict?

Hallman: Perhaps all the groups could be considered "special interest". There has to be some process to work this out. In some functions there must be a metro voice to decide these issues.

Burgess: As you have seen neighborhood groups grow, are they of lasting duration? When they are instigated by a city government rather than city residents are they more likely to survive?

Hallman: Both long term examples of neighborhood groups - Kansas City and Dayton - are growing in effectiveness. Kansas City with the longest history has experienced fluctuating interest.

Rehman: How do you overcome the problem of the "squeaky wheel getting the oil?"

Hallman: You provide everyone with the opportunity for input.

Cease announced the meeting of the National Panel in Portland, September 9 & 10. Mr. Hallman will be present as well as representatives from the Denver study. At that time we will have further opportunity to discuss some aspects of the neighborhood movement.

BUSINESS: Commission Minutes of meeting held June 17, 1976 - Sprecher moved to approve the minutes - the motion passed.

Committee Reports:

Simpson, Chairperson - Public Works and Transportation Committee

We have looked at the public services and facilities including water, sewer and transportation and have agreed that some functions should be at the regional level while others should remain as they are. Water supply should be regional, but retailing should be at a lower level. Sewers (major interceptors and treatment plants) handled on a regional level makes more sense because drainage basins cross jurisdictional boundaries. Solid waste disposal should be at the regional level.

Yost, Chairperson - Human Services Committee

We are talking to people from the cities, counties and CRAG. In this committee the idea is fairly well accepted that human services should be provided on the regional level - human problems are not limited to governmental boundaries. We have not reached any definite conclusions yet.

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Committee Reports - continued

Stahl, Vice-Chairperson - Finance and Taxation Committee

We are still in a fluid state and have not come up with any conclusions. We are in the process of gathering information on revenue sources.

Nightingale, Member - Public Safety Committee (Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson were excused)

We just heard from the last of our guest speakers and have tentively completed the functional assignment of fire protection. We expect to finish the functional assignments at our next meeting.

Moshofsky, Member - Land Use, Recreation and Cultural Activities Committee

Tuesday we will be meeting on the difficult and complex part of our assignment - land use planning. This should complete our deliberations in preparation for making functional assignments.

FRAMEWORK MODELS

Cease asked Kay Rich to comment on the models.

Rich briefly explained the wall charts displaying the suggested models for government: Today, Short Range Alternate I, Short Range Alternate II, Middle Range Alternate I, Middle Range Alternate II and Long Range.

Discussion:

Burgess: Do you want us to decide which is the most practical and feasible model?

Cease said he would accept a motion to that effect.

Simpson made a motion to accept as the working model a short-range model, which would be a combination of Alternate I and II, and one long range model. Stahl seconded the motion and it passed.

Cease: In our August meeting we want to be able to discuss specifics. By our October meeting we will have to have a good idea of what we want to recommend to the legislature.

Rich pointed out that we are attempting to do two things: Internally the Committees will be working with these adopted models to come up with functional assignments and organizational structure. At the same time we will be meet with various community groups to learn their opinions on our proposals.

Snedecor asked how we had finally arrived at having a chief executive officer in the models.

Cease said some of the committees have strongly expressed this idea.

We must stress that at this stage the Commission has not adopted any firm plan or recommendations. If the Commission adopts a short range plan and a long range plan, we are leaving open the option for future modifications in moving from one to the other.

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Framework Models - continued

Moshofsky said he was uneasy in proposing anything for the long range. We should discuss the short range, but merely suggest the long range.

Moshofsky made a motion to amend the first motion and accept only the short range model for discussion. Keller seconded the motion.

There followed a discussion on this motion.

Sprecher stated his objection to the amendment.

Yost: If we take a timid approach we destroy the sense of this Commission. It would be misleading not to have a short, middle and long range models.

Shepherd felt Moshofsky motion was to bold at this time.

Jaeger agreed with Moshofsky; in the long range we should go all the way.

Motion to amend failed.

At the request of Mr. Shepherd, a count of hands was taken, and the motion passed to accept the short range and the long range models for discussion purposes.

Cease: In your committees take what was done tonight and proceed to discuss specifics. At the August meeting we will confirm our framework models. The staff will put together what has been done here and send it to you with a covering memorandum.

Nightingale made a motion which was seconded by Moshofsky against public discussion of the long range plan. This motion failed.

Mary Pedersen asked why we have two short range plans, two middle range but only one long range.

Cease said we still have time to develop long range plans. We are not finished with our committee work.

Mattersdorf: What are the significant differences between the "today" model and the "short-range?"

Rich: In the short range plan there would be a directly elected Tri-County Council. This would increase visibility and accountability to the public. Tri-Met and the Port of Portland would be brought under some control of the Council for policy and budgetary purposes.

Stahl said the Finance Committee could use some information from the other committees on how they see revenue sharing and tax structure.

Meeting adjourned.