

CITY OF CHARLOTTE
MECKLENBURG COUNTY
MEMORANDUM

June 2, 1994

To: County Commissioners
City Councilmembers

From: Parks Helms, Ann Schrader and Bob Walton (County
representatives); Stan Campbell, Hoyle Martin and
Richard Vinroot (City representatives)

Re: Political Consolidation ("Committee of Six").

At our respective annual retreats, we agreed to consider political consolidation in this manner: three members of each body should meet once or twice to try to agree on "principles" they could recommend to both bodies. If those principles were acceptable, both bodies would appoint a citizens committee ("Charter Commission") to develop a proposed plan of consolidation and charter. Thereafter, the charter would be submitted to public referendum, and if favorable, legislative approval of it would be sought.

Pursuant to that concept, we have met several times and adopted consolidation principles for your consideration. If they are acceptable, we hope that you will agree to proceed to step two in this process by first appointing a Charter Drafting Committee, and later a Charter Commission. In doing so, we will ensure from the beginning that any plan or charter considered will not deviate from such principles. They are as follows:

Description

Explanation

1. Name

"Charlotte-Mecklenburg Metropolitan Government" or "Metro-Government"

2. Size and form
of governing
body

8 districts, 3 at-large, for a total of 11 voting members. Those districts shall be carefully drawn and balanced so that 4 are considered "Democratic" and 4 "Republican" in their likely voting tendencies.

<u>Description</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
3. System of government	Council-Manager System, as now
4. Partisan vs Non-Partisan Elections	Partisan elections, as now
5. Election Method	Nominated and elected by district; and at-large, as now
6. Minority Representation	3 of 8 districts to be established as predominantly minority populated districts.
7. Towns	Each town shall have the option of retaining its charter and continuing its existence as a separate municipality, or becoming a part of the consolidated government. In either event, however, the voters in the towns would be able to vote (a) in the referendum on consolidation, and (b) in subsequent consolidated government elections, should the referendum pass.
8. Part-time vs Full-time Elected Officials	Part-time elected officials, as now
9. Presiding officer	To be designated as "Mayor", elected at-large and to remain part-time, as now. To have no vote except in event of ties, and as required by statutes (e.g. 3/4 rule votes), and to have limited veto (of 6/5 or 5/4 votes) and 1/3 of appointments
10. Terms	2-year terms, as now, unless the Charter Commission recommends 4-year terms. Our committee noted that county voters recently rejected 4-year terms; however there was sentiment among our group to go to longer terms, consistent with other cities and counties our size, should the Charter Commission determine that is appropriate.

Description

Explanation

11. Service Districts

Under consolidated government, a geographic system of equitable "service districts" shall be established and regularly re-evaluated. For each district there shall be an accounting of the levels of public services provided to it, and taxes shall be assessed and pro-rated between all of the districts accordingly. Thus, there will be an annual (or other reasonable period of time) assessment of the kinds and levels of public services being provided to all geographic areas of the (former) city and county, and the tax rates for those areas shall be set on the basis of those assessments. As a consequence, it is anticipated that the levels of tax in the urbanized areas shall be greater than in the suburban areas until those areas fully develop.

12. Procedure

We recommend the Procedure and Schedule outlined on the enclosed Schedule A.

In summary, this procedure would work like this: we (jointly) will appoint a committee of 15 to draft the new charter before year end 1994; that new charter must conform to our 11 "principles". Next, we will appoint/expand that committee to 25, whose role will be to hold public hearings, educate the community and refine the Charter. They will be asked to report back to us not later than June 30, 1995. Following that, a public referendum will be held on the new charter at the time of the City elections in November, 1995. If it is approved by the voters, we will seek legislative approval of that Charter by the General Assembly in their short session beginning in May, 1996. Assuming Legislative approval, both governments would complete their "separate" fiscal years in June, 1997, and begin to function as "one" on July 1, 1997. The first election of the Mayor and Council of the consolidated government would take place in September (primaries) and November (election) 1997. Under this timetable the City officials elected in November 1995 would serve their full terms, the County officials elected in November

Page 4

1996 would serve one year of their terms, and the two bodies would meet together to prepare and adopt their first consolidated budget (during May and June, 1997), and meet and sit together as a "transition" 21-person governing body from July 1, 1997 until the election of the first "official" 11-member Council and Mayor in November 1997, who will take office in December of that year.

We recommend that both bodies place this report on their agendas for consideration as soon as possible. If approved without change, we will proceed as indicated. If either or both bodies make changes, our "Committee of Six" will meet once more to try to resolve any differences between us, and re-submit the revised report to both bodies for final approval.

Finally, Ann Schrader's "Minority Report" is also attached for your consideration.

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Enclosures

cc Wendell White
Jerry Fox

SCHEDULE A

**PROCEDURE AND SCHEDULE FOR
CITY/COUNTY CONSOLIDATION**

DETAILED PROCEDURE

SCHEDULE

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| 1) | City Council and Board of County Commissioners agree to a procedure and projected schedule. | July 11, 1994 (County)
July 25, 1994 (City) |
| 2) | City Council and Board of Commissioners name 8 persons to serve on a Committee to draft a Preliminary Charter. Each body will name two of its own members and two other persons who are fully acquainted with City and County government and knowledgeable of political interests in the community. Each body would name two Democrats and two Republicans. The Mayor and Chairman of the County Commission would name four persons (two Republicans and two Democrats) to that committee, one of which shall be Chairman, and the other Vice-Chairman. That 12-person committee would be known as the "Charter Drafting Committee". | August 15, 1994 (County)
August 22, 1994 (City) |
| 3) | City and County legal staffs are asked (a) to identify all charter provisions or special legislation affecting the City or County governments that would need to be reviewed and, perhaps, amended, if consolidation were undertaken, and (b) to annotate the 1971 proposed consolidated charter to indicate what changes or current provisions are different from those in the 1971 charter. | August 15, 1994 to
September 15, 1994 |

- 4) Charter Drafting Committee, using the 1971 charter as a discussion guide, and drawing on the work of the legal staffs, begin to produce a Preliminary Charter.

Preliminary Charter is completed.

September 15, 1994

November 15, 1994
- 5) Charter Drafting Committee presents Preliminary Charter to City Council and Board of County Commissioners.

November 29, 1994 (City)
December 2, 1994 (County)
- 6) City Council and Board of County Commissioners appoint a 20-member commission representative of the entire community. Membership can include persons who served on the Charter Drafting Committee. The Mayor and Chairman of the County Commission would name five persons to that commission, one of which shall be Chairman, and the other Vice-Chairman. That 25-person commission would be known as the "Charter Commission".

December 12, 1994 (City)
December 19, 1994 (County)
- 7) Charter Commission holds a series of public hearings on the Preliminary Charter draft and directs widespread efforts to inform citizens and secure their comments and reactions.

January 15, 1995 to
June 30, 1995
- 8) Charter Commission makes changes as appropriate in light of the public hearings and comments and approves a final Charter and necessary companion legislation.

July 1, 1995 to
August 15, 1995

- 9) Referendum on proposed merger and City Council Elections. November 7, 1995
- 10) Charter and companion legislation enacted by the General Assembly. May 15, 1996 to June 15, 1996
- 11) Board of County Commissioners Elections. November 5, 1996
- 12) Members of the City Council and Board of Commissioners would continue to preside separately over City and County through the end of their respective fiscal years (June 30, 1997). However, they would also meet together as the transition consolidated board to consider and adopt the budget for the first fiscal year (July 1, 1997) of the consolidated government. After July 1, 1997, the Board of Commissioners and the City Council would no longer be in existence. The members of both bodies would continue to meet as the transition governing body of the consolidated government with full authority to operate as the governing body of the consolidated City/County government until replaced in December by members elected in the first consolidated government election on November 4, 1997. The transition governing board would elect a Chair and Vice-Chair among its members. January 2, 1997
- 13) Merger of City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg County governments becomes effective. July 1, 1997

- 14) First Primary for members of consolidated government governing body. September 23, 1997
- 15) First election of members of consolidated governing body. November 4, 1997
- 16) Members elected to consolidated governing body take office. December 1, 1997



MECKLENBURG COUNTY
Board of County Commissioners

MEMORANDUM

TO: Political Consolidation "Committee of Six"
FROM: Ann Schrader *AS*
DATE: May 31, 1994
RE: Minority Report to Consolidation Committee

After reviewing the June 3 memo to be sent to the Board of County Commissioners and City Council, I would like to add a Minority Report on two issues.

Issue 9: Presiding Officer - I would like for the presiding officer to have a vote. In my opinion this provides more accountability to that position. The make-up of the board would then have to change accordingly.

Issue 12: Procedure - I am still concerned about the idea that the consolidated body would "function as one" before anyone is actually elected. The six-months time (July-December) is a troubling feature in this process, especially since it will be a 21-member body. I would encourage the citizens committee that will review our suggestions to give consideration to changing the election to May 1997 (regular primary time) and swearing in on July 1, 1997 (or prior to the July 1 date). There is a concern about the current elected bodies having to serve abbreviated terms. My feeling is that anyone who chooses to run for the "short term" knows that the term is limited and has the option to decide to run or not.

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cc: Jerry Fox, County Manager
Wendell White, City Manager

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