

**Second Report of the Executive Director
to the Macomb County Charter Commission
March 22, 2009**

Honorable Charter Commissioners:

This will serve as my second formal report to the Board of Charter Commissioners.

We continue meetings with various officials from within and without County government. I report to you on those executive level meetings as follows:

Macomb County Community Service Agency Director Frank Taylor, gave an overview of his responsibilities and operational span of control of a combination of essential citizen services provided by the county that have been identified as “essential functions” at the Committee level.

South Lake Superintendent of Public Schools Deborah Thompson, was given a briefing on the Charter Commission’s work. She provided insight into the aspects of county services that relate to her district. These correlated with Mr. Taylor’s discussions.

Members of the Board of the Sterling Heights Area Chamber of Commerce, a group of area business leaders was briefed. They indicated their support for the direction the Charter Commissioners are headed in reducing the number of County Commissioners, enabling a strong County Executive and preserving a check and balance among the Executive, Legislative and Judicial Branches of County Government.

Macomb County Public Health Officer/ Director Thomas Kalkofen, provided another internal view based upon his decades of experience working in Macomb County government. He covered the internal structure and management of county operations that provide health services to the public, both direct (e.g., public health) and indirect (e.g., medical examiner) that are unique to his department. In the event of a declared public emergency, it is his position that controls county operations for its duration.

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG) Executive Director Paul Tait, warmly received the Charter Commissioners’ work to date. He too emphasized his belief that a strong Executive, with a limited number of Commissioners, to confirm a budget and act as a check and balance, appeared the best course to follow to bring management of a government as complex as Macomb County’s into the 21st Century.

Special Counsel to the Charter Commission, Miller Canfield, was briefed on the revised scheduling of the Commission’s work. Miller Canfield lead member for this project, Attorney Michael McGee, explained that they were well coordinated with General Counsel O’Reilly Rancilio Attorneys John Nitz and Don DeNault, “of counsel” to that firm, Attorney George Ward (who is knowledgeable of the Wayne County and Detroit City Charters) and pro bono Municipal Finance Counsel, Attorney John Axe.

Interfaith Council on Racial Justice Director Reverend Michail T. Curro, provided support for the progress of the Charter Commission as it was explained to him. He

also favored a strong leader with a reduced number of Commissioners to review the Executive's actions. Reverend Curro also mentioned the changing demographics of the County. He favors the notion of a County Executive being accessible to those with special issues and having the ability to effect necessary change.

In a similar vein, a delegation of Michigan Farm Bureau Directors, representing the interests of agriculture in the county, met with Chairman Femminineo and me. They also wanted governance of the county where they would be able to express the unique aspects of their industry to a leader who would be able to advance programs and projects designed to meet the needs of their group.

At this writing Macomb Community College President and distinguished economist Jim Jacobs has tentatively agreed to speak to the full Charter Commission at its April 1st regularly scheduled meeting at 7:00pm on the 9th floor of the County Administration Building. Dr. Jacobs has been asked to speak on the future of the Macomb County economy and the trends in demographic shifts he foresees.

Timelines for Committee work have been extended, subject to change, with the entire Commission now scheduled to meet on Wednesday, April 22nd to approve Committee work for transmittal to legal for drafting. That action will provide a public copy of the Committees' work, of agreed upon concepts for inclusion in the proposed County Charter, consolidated in one writing. The Commission website has been and will continue to be updated as needed. Please check its' calendar at least once a week.

At this writing four public forums at venues (yet to be finalized) in roughly the four quadrants of the county are being scheduled for the last week of April and the first week of May. These are for the public to learn more about the Commission's work and to receive additional public comment on the proposed Charter while it is in drafting. Less than a quorum of Charter Commissioners will be asked to attend those forums in their vicinity. Additional regular Charter Commission meetings will also be held until the final proposed Charter is voted upon for delivery to the Governor. That vote is currently scheduled for the Charter Commission meeting of Wednesday, June 3rd.

The Charter Commission's Administrative Assistant, Ms. Edie LaBarge, continues to maintain a record of the Commission's activities, transmittals and financial dealings.

Respectfully submitted,

Ralph Maccarone

Ralph "Skip" Maccarone
Executive Director