

Easy Citizen Involvement

Dick Spady, President. Jim Spady, Vice President

4426 – 2nd Avenue N.E.; Seattle, WA 98105

(206) 634-0589; (206) 633-3561 (fax)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, June 5, 2007

Contact: Jim Spady

206-634-0589 or 206-949-8484

Initiative 24 to file over 60,000 King County signatures Wednesday *Dick's Drive-Ins* co-founder heads "Citizen Councilor Network" campaign

Seattle – Proponents of King County Initiative 24, the "Citizen Councilor Network" initiative, plan to file over 60,000 signatures with the Clerk of the King County Council on Wednesday, June 6, at 1:30 p.m. Initiative author and sponsor, Dick Spady, co-founder of *Dick's Drive-In* Restaurants, says he is confident that I-24 will be the first county initiative to qualify for the November 2007 ballot. "We already have collected more than enough signatures," Spady said, "and we have more than two weeks left to keep circulating our petitions."

Supporters of more open, transparent and "user friendly" county government applaud the move, because I-24 aims to make it easier, more convenient, and more comfortable for interested citizens to get more involved. "Building on similar efforts such as the County's existing Priorities For People program, I-24 seeks to complement and improve on the traditional public hearing process," Spady said. "The goal of I-24 is to make participating in the public hearing process as easy as having friends and neighbors over for coffee."

The official ballot title for King County Initiative 24 is: "Shall a Citizen Councilor Network be established in King County for citizens to meet, discuss public issues, and provide opinions."

Spady does more than run one of Seattle's favorite fast food restaurant chains. In the 1960's he began researching ways to make it easier for interested citizens to participate more conveniently, efficiently and effectively in government. "Big meetings, which are often at remote distances and inconvenient times, are the Achilles' Heal of our democracy" Spady said. "Most regular people aren't comfortable speaking at a big meeting, and even if they are, they just don't have time to attend a big public hearing downtown. As a result, even on issues that interest citizens, the vast majority of citizens are so frustrated by the process that they simply can't participate in traditional public hearings."

King County Initiative 24 is the result of Spady's 40 years of research into networked, small group communication systems.

If enacted into law by the King County Council or by voters this November, I-24 would compliment the traditional public hearing process by encouraging interested citizens to volunteer as "citizen councilors." These volunteers would meet periodically in networked small groups, at times and places convenient to them during a 30-day "participation window." During each round of the process, each small group could review a multi-media or other presentation summarizing the key facts and the different possible solutions, share individual opinions

verbally within the small group, but also share their opinions with all of the other participants in all of the other small groups, by responding to a detailed written survey, with all results posted on the world wide web.

So in contrast to traditional public hearings, the “Citizen Councilor Network” will:

1. Allow participants to meet in networked small groups of 8-12 participants at times and places convenient to them (usually homes or workplaces) during a 30-day “participation window”;
2. Provide participants with a multi-media summary of every major perspective on a broad topic (such as transportation, health care, environmental quality, or taxes), or a specific proposal (such as replacing the Evergreen Point Bridge, expanding free medical clinics for children, promoting bio-diesel, or reducing property taxes).
3. Provide every participant a comfortable opportunity to speak during the small group meeting; and
4. Obtain valuable feedback from the participants through a detailed, written survey that allows them to agree or disagree with each question, “object” to any question they feel is misleading or inappropriate, and even help select the next topic for discussion.

The process proposed by I-24 will be administered by volunteers, funded entirely with voluntary donations, and overseen by the county auditor. The auditor must consider the advice of a broad-based steering committee (composed of key public officials or their representatives) before choosing each topic for discussion or approving the multi-media presentation and survey, all with one goal: to ensure that the entire process is widely viewed as transparent, fair, accurate and even-handed.

“Without using tax dollars, the Citizen Councilor Network will open a much bigger, more convenient and thus more effective feedback communication channel between citizens and government,” Spady said. “It will not replace traditional public hearings, but instead provide more detailed citizen input concerning the most important issues facing our county and local communities.”

For more information, call campaign manager Jim Spady at 206-634-0589 or visit www.EasyCitizenInvolvement.com

Dick Spady will also be available for TV, radio or print interviews immediately following the 1:30 PM, June 6 filing at:

The Office of the Clerk of the King County Council
W 1039 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, WA
Phone: (206) 296-0364

###