

MINUTES
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
June 15, 2016

PRESENT: Chairman James Staunton, Commissioners Lynn Hidek, Karen Marsden, Gary Bousquet, Dennis Donovan, and Eric Bergman

Absent: Art Kuever, Brad Sullivan and Peter Nye

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m.

Minutes:

A motion was made by D. Donovan, seconded by K. Marsden to approve the minutes of June 1, 2016 as submitted. The motion carried with a vote of 5 in favor and 1 abstention (G. Bousquet).

Old Business:

The commission has received 19 charter revision recommendations from the public to date. The first few recommendations were reviewed, some decisions were made and then it was determined the consideration to change the form of government should be addressed before going further. Each commissioner picked two towns to interview key people regarding a town manager form of government.

Assignment Reports:

The towns chosen included Simsbury, Bloomfield, Tolland, Avon, West Hartford, East Hampton, Killingly, and Canton with the following comments made by and/or information provided by the people interviewed (in no particular order):

- A video in which Matt Hart spoke to the Simsbury Charter Revision Commission
- 35 out of 169 Connecticut towns have a Town Manager or a hybrid form of that government
- Can call this position something other than Town Manager such as Chief Administrative Officer
- The First Selectman, with a Town Manager form of government, receives \$15,000 a year for 15 hours of work a week, with a five (5) person Board (in one particular town)
- The Town Manager has to sign a Code of Ethics
- If the Town Manager is not performing he/she can be fired/ removed with a majority vote of the Town Council
- Some towns require residency in that town and expect he/she to become involved in the town
- Some towns provide an open ended contract, otherwise the position is hard to fill especially if the town has a residency requirement
- If the Town Manager is let go, he/she would receive a severance package
- The Town Manager answers to the council/board and they direct him
- The Town Manager keeps consistency especially with long range projects, handling town planning, town planner grants, resource officer
- Projects can continue over a number of years and while the faces change on various boards and commissions as often as every two (2) years, the Town Manager provides consistency with projects and eliminates the possibility of things getting lost or projects slowed down
- A Town Manager would have to have a Master in Public Administration, Public Affairs
- A suggested pay scale for a Town Manager is approximately \$130,000
- Two (2) towns went from a Town Manager form of government to First Selectman (New London and Hartford)
- A Town Manager form of government has more of a business model, working closely with the budgets, having accountability and is neutral to politics
- The Town Manager has a network/resources to reach out to when dealing with issues
- One town (which does not seem to be the norm) was involved with the Board of Education
- Need to give the Town Manager enough power so he/she does not get caught up in the bureaucracy
- In one town, the council is the go between the Town Manager and the residents.
 - The Town Manager prepares the budget, presents it to the council who holds a public hearing and then a referendum is held to vote on the budget

- The Town Council establishes policies/ordinances and the Town Manager carries them out
- The Town Manager can hire/fire all personnel except for the elected positions
 - He/she cannot not alter the appointed boards which were appointed by the council
 - The Town Manager can create positions as long as they are not department/agency heads
- The Town Manager should be/could also be the Human Resource Manager
- This position could eliminate the need for a Board of Finance; however the Town Council could make subcommittees in the board's place
- The Town Council, with the assistance of a search committee, interviews candidates and then hires the Town Manager
- A town with a Town Manager has the same financial rating as Clinton and its debt service is 5% of the budget
- L. Hidek will develop a format to present to the residents at a public hearing to illustrate a Town Manager/ Town Council form of government and a possible job description for the Town Manager
- Briefly hit on a RTM form of government, though Clinton is far too small a town for this and it removes the voting rights from the residents

The Planning and Zoning letter regarding splitting Planning and Zoning into two separate entities which was received from Vice Chairman Michael Knudsen was discussed.

- The P&Z voted in favor of this split with a vote of 5 in favor and 4 against
- Policies should be set up for the position (Chairman), not the person
- There are two vital roles of the P&Z: those being planning things prior to doing things and zoning regulations
- Double staffing and time constraints are just two of the problems
- When two groups have power the First Selectman would become the advisory position
- Both commissions would have to be elected
- A suggestion was made to change the charter from MAY to SHALL for the hiring of a Town Planner

A motion was made by D. Donovan, seconded by E. Bergman to recommend NOT splitting the Planning and Zoning Commission. The motion carried with a vote of 5 in favor (E. Bergman, K. Marsden, D. Donovan, L. Hidek, and J. Staunton) and 1 abstain (G. Bousquet).

A motion was made by D. Donovan, seconded by G. Bousquet to table the MAY to SHALL decision for a Town Planner until the next meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Comments: None

The meeting was adjourned at 8:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wendy McDermott
Clerk