

Charter Revision Commission Meeting
Wednesday, October 6, 2021
6:30 p.m.
Fairfield, CT

MINUTES

A recording of this meeting can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ai75jPg59QQ>

MEMBERS PRESENT: Bryan Cafferelli-Chair, Chris Brogan-Vice Chair, Marlene Battista, Jay Gross, Pamela Iacono, John Mitola, John Wynne

OTHERS PRESENT: Attorney Steven Mednick, Town Attorney James Baldwin, members of the public

- I. **Call to Order.** Chairman Bryan Cafferelli called the meeting to order at 6:30pm.
- II. **Roll Call.** Recording Secretary Pru O'Brien took the roll call. All members were present.
- III. **Approval of Minutes.** Pamela Iacono made a motion to postpone approval of the minutes to a date certain of the next meeting on 10/14/21. John Mitola seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.
- IV. **Overview of the Charter Revision process.** Mr. Cafferelli thanked the public for attending the meeting and wanted to give them an overview of the process. He introduced Attorney Steven Mednick who presented the Charter Revision Process. This Power Point document is also online with the backup documents for this meeting. The Charter is our town's governing document. It establishes rules, functions and procedures that reflect history and cultures of the town. There are only two required provisions of the charter, to establish legislative function and executive function. Everything else is permitted under Home Rule but not required under Home Rule. State Statute provides for periodic updates of the charter. Fairfield's last revision was in 2006. There is a Review and Law of Home Rule posted on the website and it is very important to understand this revision process. Tonight, is a required statutory hearing of the public so the commission can get the perspective of the town. There will be a second one later as well. Issues will be analyzed in an objective way. There will be a panel of experts who know the powers of local government. Going thru the process Attorney Mednick will try to combine law with culture through community input. Communication can be made through email and public hearings. The objective is to improve governance and accountability of boards and elected officials that satisfies the public.

Charter issues:

- Governance
- Boards and Commissions
- Budget Process
- Operations

Non-Charter Issues:

- Traffic Lights
- Planning and Zoning Issues
- Lease Laws
- Budget Allocations

The result is to have a document that will be approved by the BOS. Once passed, it will go to the Secretary of State's office for approval and then to referendum in November 2022.

- V. **Public Hearing – To Hear Comments from the Public.** Mr. Cafferelli acknowledged emails sent to the CRC and thanked the public for sending them. He then opened the meeting to the public for comments:

(Full comments are on the recording of the meeting.)

- Jeanne Stevens, 71 Old Mill Rd Maintaining Fairfield Historic Cemeteries
- Matthew Hallock, 6 Summerville St
 - Review National Civic League Model City Charter document as a guide;
 - Consider a Preamble to the Charter.
 - Creation of Citizens Commission
- Sarah Keitt, 538 Winnepoge Dr Concerns about CRC members who served on Strategic Planning Committee.
- Ed Bateson, 2195 North Street (RTM District 1)
 - Many issues need to be addressed including status of elective offices
 - Too much government and too many boards and commission
 - Departments should be accountable to elected officials
 - Glad to see attorneys on CRC
- William Gerber, _____ (RTM District 2)
 - Concerned about the imbalance on the CRC caused by inclusion of members of Strategic Planning Committee
- Jenn Jacobsen, _____
 - Equal representation from all voting districts
 - Review purchasing authority
- Kathy Braun, _____
 - CRC should conduct additional public hearings
 - Leave Conservation as a separate department from Planning
- Carolyn Trabuco, _____ Charter is in conflict with Code with regard to pensions and retirement
- Elizabeth Zezima, 160 Fairfield Woods Rd Read statement from Judy Ewing generally addressing public participation, indexing of

public documents, vacancies on Board of Selectmen, referendum, term of service on Board of Education, commencement of the term of office (see, CRC Website and submission dated 6 October 2021)

- State Representative Laura Devlin
134th District CRC transparency by posting meetings and minutes and keeping the public informed
- Selectwoman Nancy Lefkowitz Lack of diverse voices on CRC
- Karen Wackerman
RTM District 7 • Concerns about CRC members who served on Strategic Planning Committee.
• Unelected members serving on boards and commission are an attribute
- Patrick Burhenne, 27 Riverside Dr Maintain a strong conservation role as a check on development
- Keri Langerman, 1506 Burr St Create a process for an equitable charter and representation of the diversity in Town
- Rep. Cristin McCarthy Vahey
133rd District CRC schedule, in-person meetings when possible, for public.
- Dru Georgiadis, 321 Puritan Rd
RTM District 9 Importance of retaining boards and commissions

VI. **Approval of Commission schedule.** Mr. Cafferelli made a motion to approve the meeting schedule for 2021:

- Thursday, October 14 • Monday, November 8 • Thursday, December 9
- Thursday, October 28 • Tuesday, November 16 • Tuesday, December 21

All meetings will begin at 6:30pm.

The motion carried unanimously.

VII. **Adjournment.** Marlene Battista made a motion to adjourn. Pamela Iacono seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:07pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Pru O'Brien
Recording Secretary