

MINUTES

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

September 24, 2011
Town Hall Meeting Room

A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was held on September 24, 2011 in the Weston Town Hall Meeting Room. Present were Woody Bliss, Richard A. Bochinski, Nina Daniel, Arne de Keijzer, Kenneth C. Edgar, Jr., Susan Moch and Dennis H. Tracey, III. The meeting was called to order at 11:00 am.

The Commission first deferred consideration of the minutes of its September 21, 2011 Meeting.

The Commission then received comments from Selectman David Muller. Mr. Muller provided responses to the questions previously provided to him by the Commission. Mr. Muller expressed concern about the low turnout at municipal elections, and provided his thoughts on ways to improve participation. He expressed support for the Town Meeting form of government. Mr. Muller also provided his comments on the budget process, the size and terms for the Board of Selectmen, the responsibilities of the First Selectman and Town Administrator, the scope of issues that should be addressed by Town Meeting, the role of parties in selection of candidates for public office, and the role of boards and commissions. A full transcript of Mr. Muller's remarks will be made available on the Town's website.

Town Administrator Tom Landry then appeared before the Commission and shared his views on the Charter, accompanied by a detailed written submission. Mr. Landry addressed in particular the responsibilities of the Town Administrator, including with respect to evaluation of town employees, the Annual Town Budget Meeting and the budgeting process. A full transcript of Mr. Landry's remarks will be made available on the Town's website.

Former First Selectman George Guidera then appeared before the Commission and shared his views on the Charter, including comments regarding the effectiveness of the Annual Town Budget Meeting, the budget process, direct voting, the role of parties in the selection of candidates for public office, the size of the Board of Selectmen and other boards and commissions, transition to a newly elected First Selectman, terms and term limits, the role of the town meeting in making significant determinations, and the role of the Town Administrator. A full transcript of Mr. Guidera's remarks will be made available on the Town's website.

Margaret Wirtenberg then provided comments on Norwalk's role providing for appointment of P&Z members as well as on the role of the League of Women Voters in encouraging voter participation by the public.

Former First Selectman Woody Bliss then appeared before the Commission and shared his views on the Charter, providing extensive written comments. Mr. Bliss addressed the standard that should be used by the Commission in evaluating proposed changes (If it ain't broke, don't fix it), the budget process, the role of unaffiliated voters, transition to a newly elected First Selectman, the role of Select Committees, and the role and responsibilities of the Board of Selectmen.

The Commission next discussed the charters of other Connecticut towns that would be primarily used to assist the Commission in its discussion of the Town Charter. The Commission reviewed a list of potential comparator towns, and after discussion, selected as the primary town charters to use as comparators the Charters of the towns of Brookfield, Canton, Ridgefield and Wilton. Other town charters will also be reviewed in appropriate circumstances.

Having no further business, the Meeting was adjourned at 1:40.

Dennis H. Tracey, III, Co-Chair