

To: Charter Commission

From: Bryan Barash and Anne Larner

Re: Materials and approach to review of Article 11

Date: February 5, 2016

Our attached packet of materials includes five documents:

- A summary table of Article 11 content, issues and recommended actions
- An annotated copy of Article 11 that includes comments from our consultants (section by section) as well as comments from the two of us. In this document we use initials to indicate the author of comments and recommendations.
- A document of additions to Article 11 that we might consider
- A Feb. 2 memo from our consultants (Marilyn Contreas, noted as MC, and Tania Stepasiuk, noted as TS) to the two of us with comments on current sections of Article 11 and a few possible additions. We used this memo and quote from it extensively in our annotated copy of Article 11.
- A second memo from Marilyn Contreas that addresses questions we raised about some possible additions to Article 11.

If we had had more time to work with our consultants, we might have been able to consolidate our materials more, following extended discussions. Despite the time handicaps, our consultants have been very responsive with quick and relevant response. Their contribution has been helpful and significant.

In reviewing Article 11 we looked at a number of charters from Massachusetts cities, the Eighth Edition of the Model City Charter, and an array of charters from similar size cities in Oregon, Washington, Minnesota, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Indiana, Connecticut, Vermont, and New Hampshire. We found Newton's General Provisions article more eclectic than most similar articles. Thus placement of sections in a more ordered and logical way became one of our goals for this article. This is in line with our commission's goal of making the charter more accessible and easily readable to the average citizen. We also discovered that some cities mostly in other states included general statements of principle on topics such as accessible public records, prohibiting conflicts of interest etc. -- even when state statutes covered these issues. Is there a way to include some such statements that does not conflict with Massachusetts state law, but does indicate these are values important to Newton? This is a topic for discussion at our next meeting.

If any information we've provided is unclear, in error, or seemingly incomplete, please let us know and we will try to address your concerns.

