



**City of Newton
Charter Commission**

Article 9: Neighborhood Areas Councils Review Document

Article 9 Review Overview

Article Leaders: Jane Frantz, Karen Manning, Chris Steele

Research related to Article 9 that is posted at newtonma.gov/charter.

The Commission held an Area Councils focused Public Hearing and Panel on September 14, 2016.

A discussion guide was published and distributed prior to the meeting.

Panelists included:

Srdj Nedeljkovic - Newton Highlands Area Council

Anil Adyanthaya - Upper Falls Area Council

Sallee Lipshutz - Waban Area Council

Marc Kaufman - Newtonville Area Council

Terry Sauro - Nonantum Neighborhood Association

Councilor John Rice - City Council (Ward 5)

Article 9 Review Overview

The panel and hearing have led to discussion and debate over Neighborhood Area Councils. Discussion points include:

- 1) How should they be formed?
- 2) What is their appropriate role?
- 3) What city resources should be available to Neighborhood Area Councils?
- 4) Are they an essential or unnecessary “layer of government”?
- 5) Should there be an area councils article in the Commission’s proposed charter, and if so, what should it encompass?
- 6) How do area councils compare to neighborhood associations?

Area Councils: History

Formation of Area Councils Permitted Through Article of 1971 Charter Revisited by Mayor Warren's Community Engagement Transition Team (2010).

Only Newton Highlands had an Area Council until 2011.

Area Councils now exist in:

- Newton Highlands (est. 1974)
- Newton Upper Falls (est. 2011)
- Waban (est. 2013)
- Newtonville (est. 2013)

Formation of a Newton Centre Area Council was initiated but not completed.

Neighborhood Councils

Members are **elected officials** subject to formal elections, election laws, Open Meeting laws, records disclosure, etc.

NAC's undertake community building, beautification projects, fundraising, neighborhood advocacy, communications

There are currently 4 neighborhood area councils in Newton:

Newton Highlands, Newtonville, Upper Falls, Waban

Village Associations

Another means of neighborhood representation

They are **informally formed** and members are not constrained by formal elections, election laws, Open Meeting laws, records disclosure, etc.

Village associations undertake community building, beautification projects, fundraising, neighborhood advocacy, communications

Multiple neighborhood associations across Newton include Chestnut Hill, Nonantum, Oak Hill Park, Lower Falls, Waban Improvement Society, Beautiful Newtonville

Area Councils in Charters

Included only in Worcester within MA (though none have ever formed)

Included for some large cities nationwide, i.e. Tacoma, WA, Spokane, WA, Washington, D.C., St. Paul, MN, Columbus, OH, Los Angeles, CA

Current language for Newton's Article 9 vague, confusing, and outdated

We need to revisit Article 9.

Article 9: Review Scenarios

1. Remove Article 9: Area Councils dissolved, and could be recreated by City Ordinance (local legislative action). Alternative: Remove Article 9 but “grandfather in” existing area councils
2. Deliberate Article 9: Purpose, Boundaries/Formation, Elections, Powers and Functions, Sections 9, 10, 11
3. Status Quo: Redraft and Reformat Only

Article 9 Review Scenarios

Scenario 1:
Remove Article 9?

Scenario 2:
Keep in Charter
and Deliberate
Substantive
Changes

Scenario 3:
Status Quo:
Redraft and
Reformat
Only

Consequences
(*Collins Memo)

Grandfather 4 Area
Councils?

Purpose, Boundaries/Formation,
Elections, Powers and Functions,
Sections 9, 10, 11

Article 9 Review Scenarios

Scenario 1. Remove Article 9?

Consequences: If Article 9 is removed from the proposed Charter, no future area councils may form. Current area councils would be accounted for in the transition provisions. The City Council could recreate the area councils via ordinance(s). If they are not recreated via city ordinance, an option would be to form as neighborhood associations.

Grandfather 4 Area Councils: The Charter could lay out parameters for keeping the existing Area Councils. This could include a “sunset clause” indicating the final year of their existence.

Consequences
(*Collins Memo)

Grandfather 4 area
councils ?

Article 9 Review Scenarios

Scenario 2:
Keep in Charter
and Deliberate
Substantive
Changes

Purpose, Boundaries/Formation,
Elections, Powers/Functions,
Sections 9, 10, 11

Article 9 Review Scenarios

Article leaders and Collins propose revised and reformatted draft to the Commission

Scenario 3:
Status Quo:
Redraft and
Reformat
Only

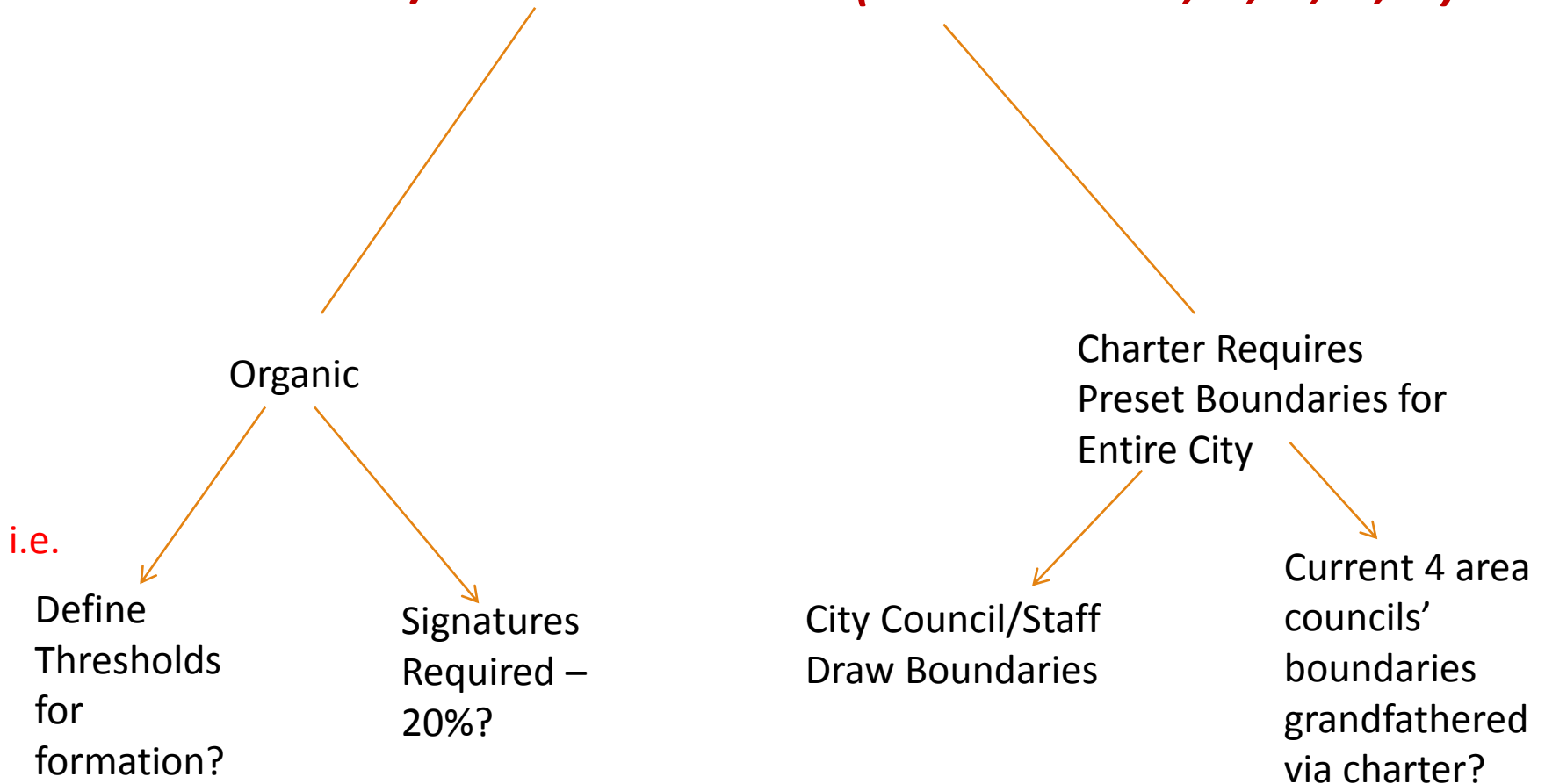
Discussion of Scenarios

*Scenario2:
Deliberate
Article Purpose (and Title)*

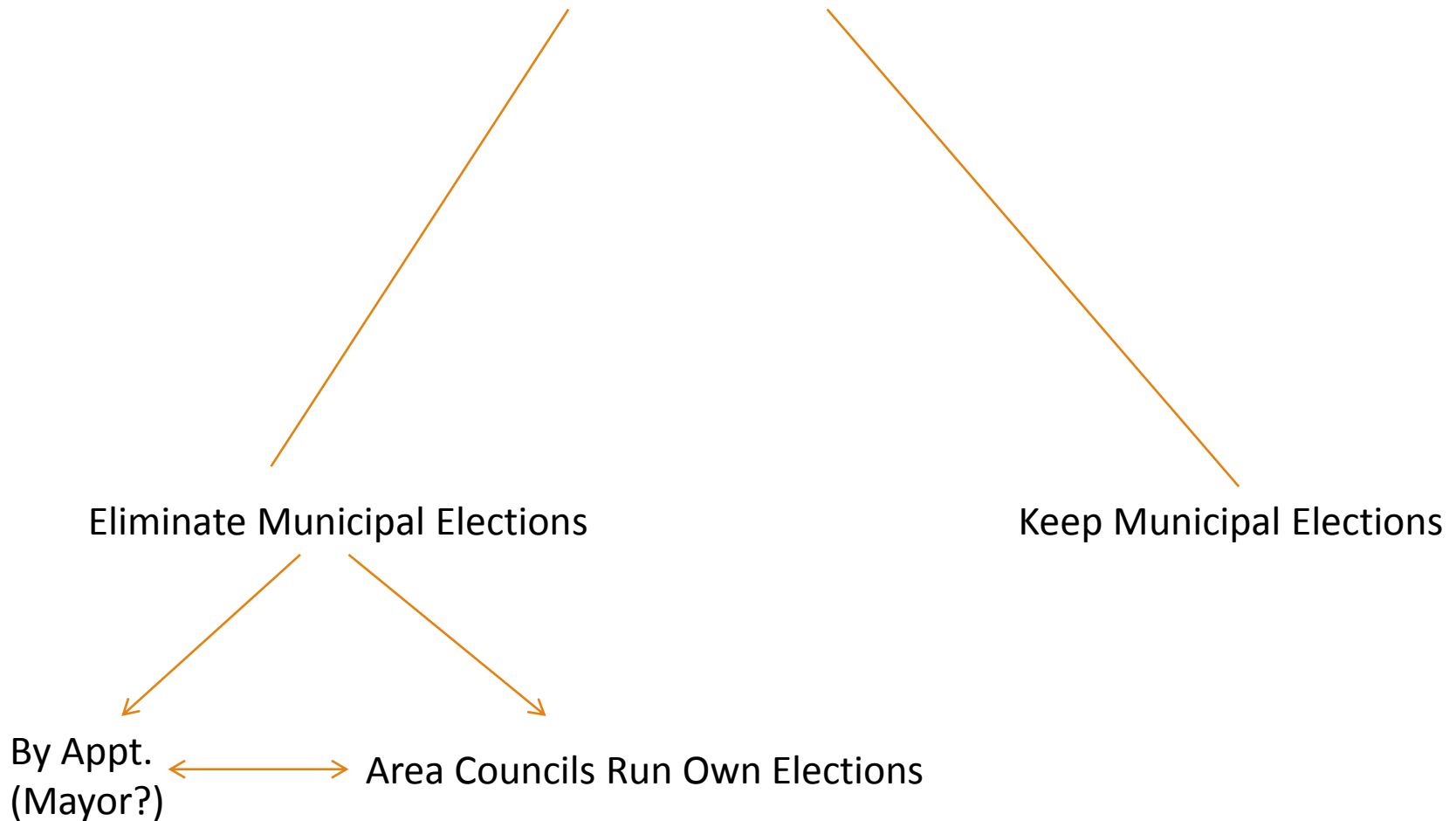
Keep as Is

Modify Section

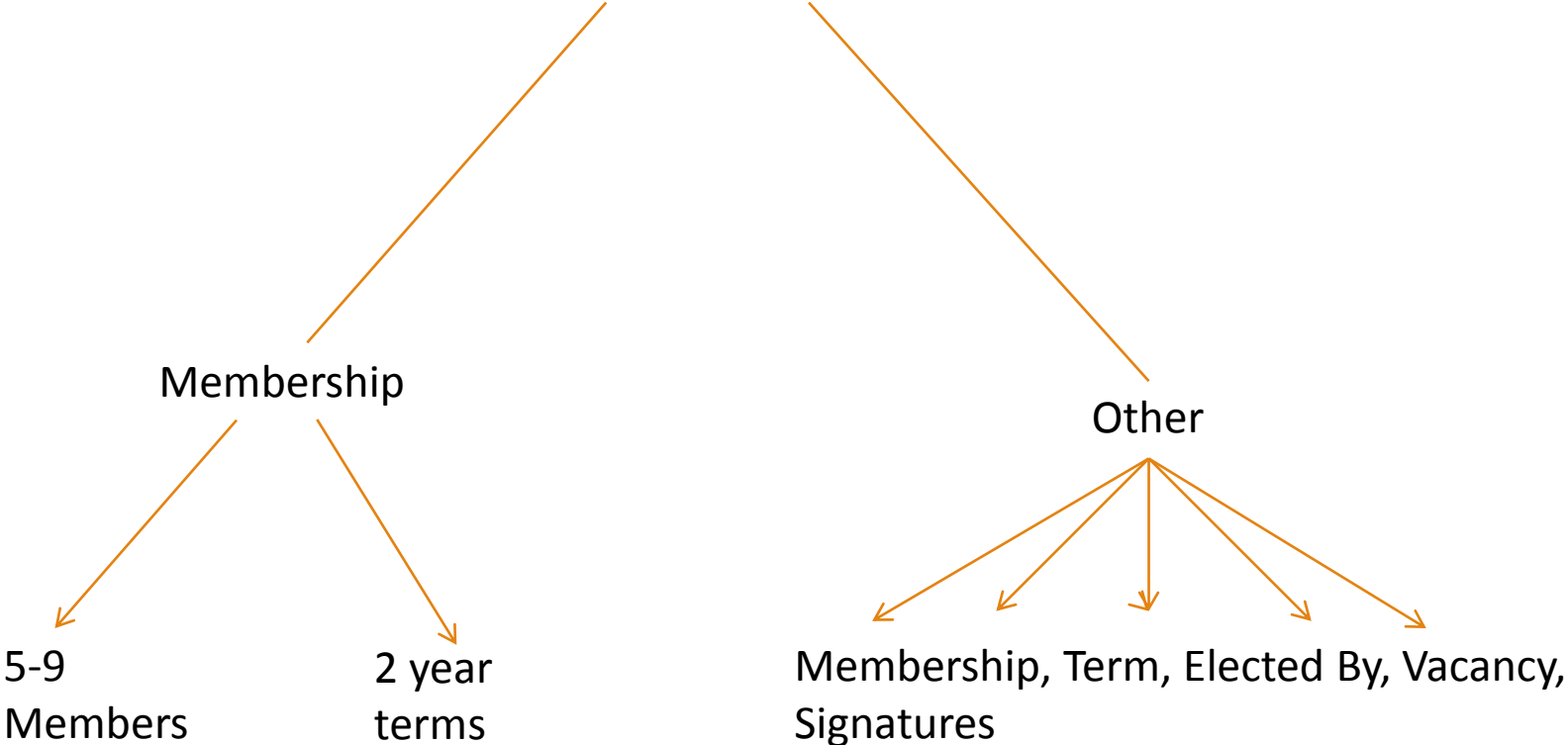
Scenario 2: Deliberate Area Council Formation/Boundaries (Section 2,3,4,5,6)



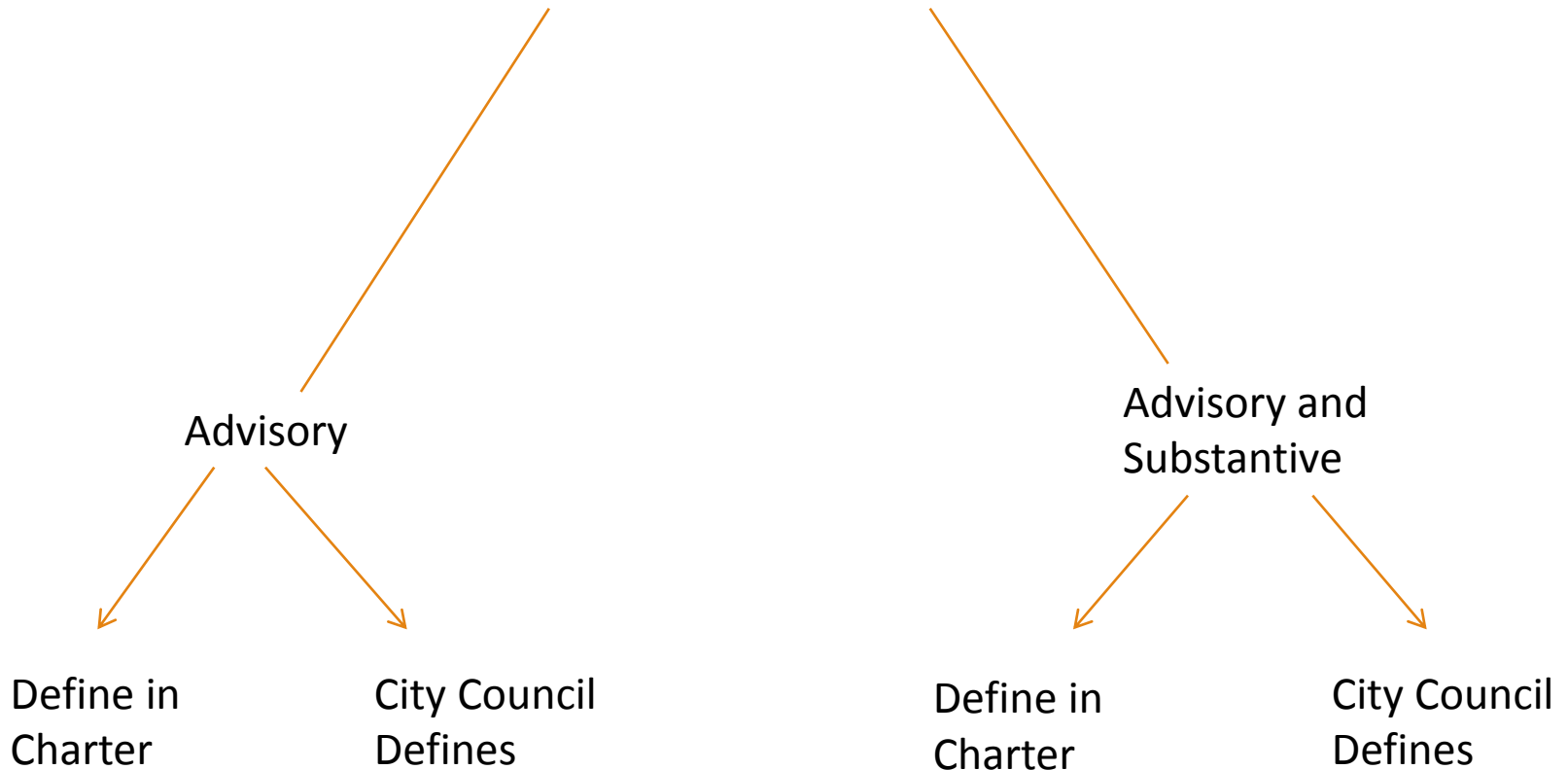
Scenario 2: Deliberate Elections



Scenario 2: Deliberate [Municipal] Elections



Scenario 2: Deliberate Powers and Functions



Scenario 2: Deliberate Sections 9, 10, 11

Section 9-9:
Compensation;
Meetings; By-
Laws; Quorum

Section 9-10:
Annual Report

Section 9-11:
Financial
Records

Scenario 2: Deliberate Other Provisions

1. Area Councils' interface with City Council and Staff, i.e. Require Dedicated Liaison?
2. Adherence to Article 11: Interference with Administration
3. Area Councils and Representation of Community Intent?
4. Indemnity (Article 11)
5. Inclusion of Businesses and Nonprofits
6. Other