

NEWTON CHARTER COMMISSION

Thursday, January 14, 2016

7:30 p.m. – City Hall – Planning Department Conference Room – Room B10

MEETING MINUTES

Present: Chair Josh Krintzman, Vice Chair Rhanna Kidwell, Bryan Barash, Jane Frantz, Howard Haywood, Anne Larner, Karen Manning, Brooke Lipsitt, Chris Steele, Jose Morgan

Josh Krintzman called the meeting to order at 7:30pm. Rhanna Kidwell, Bryan Barash, Jane Frantz, Howard Haywood, Anne Larner, Karen Manning, Chris Steele, Jose Morgan were present.

1. Approval of minutes from December 16th meeting:

Minutes were amended and approved (7-0, Lipsitt absent)

2. Approval of minutes from December 17th Public Hearing Minutes

Minutes were amended and approved (7-0, Lipsitt absent)

3. Public Comments: (Brooke Lipsitt joined the meeting at 7:35)

- Bill Renke, 142 Cornell St. offered several suggestions for improving the communication between the Commission and the community.
- Ernest Lowenstein, 57 Hyde St., said that he was unable to find the Charter Commission website. Karen explained how to find the website to Mr. Lowenstein.
- Sue Flicop said that she had not received emails about Commission news and updates.
- Bill Humphrey, 712 Chestnut St., advocated rank choice voting whenever possible to eliminate the need for preliminary elections

4. Consultant Help: Scope of Work

Chris led the discussion related to hiring a consultant for research and support. In attendance was Stephen McGoldrick from the Collin's Center at the University of Massachusetts of Boston. McGoldrick asked for a better understanding of the services that the Commission would like the center to provide. Also he wanted to know what process the commission was using to find an outside consultant. Josh said that in contemplating the use of a consultant, the Commission considered what it wanted the scope of consultant work to be and that it wanted to define the role of the consultant. He said that the Collins Center sounded like a fantastic resource that we may be able to utilize without an RFP process. Mr. McGoldrick said that he

was fine with that and that he expected to have a discussion about how to modify a proposal that reflects the will of the Commission.

5. Clerical Assistance for the Charter Commission

Jane led the discussion of the new Clerk Assistant and introduced Jose Morgan to the Charter Commission. Jane and Karen met with Jose on Monday, January 11 at City Hall and gave a quick review of his background. Karen then went through the job responsibilities for Jose, which include but are not limited to:

- Attend Charter Commission meetings and hearings. Record notes and discussions including motions
- Compile Minutes through use of meeting/hearing audio recordings
- Compile meeting packet information and other paperwork as needed prior to meetings and hearings
- Assist with other clerical responsibilities that may arise over the course of the Commission's work

6. Project Plan

The commission changed dates for the General Provisions and the Article 2, 3, 4 overview. The commission will address the General Provisions on February 10 and the Article 2, 3, 4 overview will be on January 27. Josh then assigned leaders for each of the article. Please see the meeting schedule for the most up-to-date leader assignments for each article.

7. Article 8 Deliberations

The Commission made the following decisions related to Article 8

8-6: Application of State Laws: Retained as in the present charter

8-1: Nonpartisan elections Retained as in the present charter

8-2: Regular City Elections

- **Date of Election:** Elections held in November- Retained as in the present charter
- **Signature requirements;** Retained as in the present charter

Mayor: 400 signatures

Council at large: 150

Ward Councilor: 50

School Committee: 150

- **Motion:** Frantz- Motion made to eliminate Article 8 Section 2c

Second: Brian Vote: 9-0

8-5: Wards- The Commission decided to table the discussion of the number of wards in the city until after the deliberations of Articles 2, 3, and 4.

8-3: Preliminary and special elections

- Preliminary for mayoral election: The Commission discussed the possibility of rank ordering candidates on a ballot in order to eliminate the need for preliminary elections. The Commission decided to table and research rank order voting and discuss the issue at the Feb.10th meeting.
- Ballot order: retained as in present charter.
- The Commission discussed what information should be on a ballot. After a thorough discussion, the Commission voted to eliminate any language other than the names and the addresses of the candidates on any ballot.
 - Brooke: motion to eliminate any language other than the names and the addresses of the candidates on any ballot.
Second: Howard Vote: 7-0-2 (Krintzman and Manning abstain)
 - Proviso: The Commission decided to table this item until after the deliberations on Articles 2, 3, 4.

8-4: Special Elections: Vacancies

School Committee and City Council vacancy:

Jane: Move that if there is a vacancy on the School Committee or the City Council, the City Council shall forthwith call a special election to fill the seat if the vacancy occurs before the last 9 months of the term. If the vacancy occurs after that point, the City Council may or may not call a special election.

Second: Brooke Vote: 6-3 (No: Kidwell, Haywood, Frantz)

Mayoral vacancy:

Jane: Motion that if the Commission adopts a strong mayoral form of government, and a permanent vacancy occurs in the office of Mayor during the last 9 calendar months of the term, the President of the City Council shall assume the position of Acting Mayor for the remainder of the term.

Second: Brooke Vote: 8-1, (No Krintzman)

The meeting adjourned at 11:05.