

NEWTON CHARTER COMMISSION
Wednesday, January 27, 2016
7:00 p.m. – City Hall – Room 222
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 7:00pm. Newton TV recorded the meeting. Rhanna Kidwell, Bryan Barash, Jane Frantz, Howard Haywood, Anne Larner, Karen Manning, Brooke Lipsitt, Chris Steele, Jose Morgan were present.

1. Approval of Meeting Minutes from January 14

Brooke asked for clarification about the process of hiring the Collins Center. Jane said that she would check the audio and amend meeting minutes as needed.

2. Public Comments

Lisle Baker, 137 Suffolk Rd., spoke about the need for a legislative model that allows a representative government to do its job. He commented that Councilors receive a great deal of information and feedback, but ultimately, it was important that the representatives make decisions.

Ernest Lowenstein, 57 Hyde St., had difficulty hearing some of the Commissioners on the audio and suggested that Commissioners speak louder.

Sallee Lipshutz, 24 Radcliffe Rd, asked whether the use of “forthwith” was still in the charter. She suggested that the Commission replace an ambiguous word with more specific language that indicated a range of time.

Andrea Kelley, 28 Putnam St., suggested that reducing the size of the City Council would be good for the city because it would increase voter identification and knowledge of candidates and efficiency of discourse. She commented that it was reasonable to look at eliminating the ward aldermen position because the at-large aldermen can handle the responsibilities, and that the ward aldermen sometimes have “tunnel vision” of issues. Ms. Kelley said her greatest concern was where the authority for special permitting lies. In her experience, when elected officials

make these decisions, conflicts arise and an unelected elected body could make fairer decisions.

3. Article 2/3/4 Overview

Brooke and Rhanna led the discussion of the functions of the Mayor, City Council and the School Committee, highlighting areas in which roles overlap and functions that may need to be revised or eliminated.

Brooke identified multiple issues where the Commission may want to spend time reviewing certain sections of the present Charter.

4. Consultant Update

Following the January 27th meeting, the Collins Center sent the Commission an updated version of what type of service they can offer to Newton. The Commission felt that the updated version did not address what it had hoped it would. Rhanna contacted the Collins Center to discuss the role of the consultant for Newton's charter review that may be different from any other town/city. The Commission needs help with the research, and insight behind the research, from the Collins Center. Rhanna then went through a revised job description with the Collins Center and, based on time involvement, came up with an estimated cost of \$18,000 plus \$12,000 to cover contingencies.

5. Communication Update

Karen updated the commission on:

- Printing Cost
- Website Update
- Email List

Chris also talked about the use of other social media outlets (i.e. Twitter, Facebook, etc....)

6. Article 8 Modifications

Brooke made a motion that in section 3-10 of Article 8, the word "forthwith" be removed from line 4 and be replaced with "...by next general meeting".

Second: Bryan (Vote: 9-0)

Anne noted that there would be a lot of reorganization of the sections of the revised charter later in the review process.

7. Use of Commission Office Space

Commission discussed the need for an office space to complete its work and for Jose to have space to complete his responsibilities.

9. Special Speakers

The commission scheduled a meeting for Monday, February 29, 2016 7:00pm at the ED Center. Mayors from other cities, community leaders, former mayors as well as former candidates have been invited to attend the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 9:30.