

NEWTON CHARTER COMMISSION
Wednesday, May 11, 2016
7:00 p.m. – City Hall – Room 222
MEETING MINUTES

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

Absent: Bryan Barash

The meeting was called to order at 7:00PM.

Approval of Minutes:

Minutes for April 12 were approved. Larner made a motion to approve, second by Steele. (Approved 8-0; Barash absent)

Public Comment:

Sallee Lipshutz, 45 Radcliffe Rd., requested that the Commission consider staggering the Councilor terms and retain the ward Councilor position.

Ted Hess-Mahan, 871 Watertown St. suggested that the Commission ask David Olsen to a meeting to discuss how the Elections Department functions. (Barash arrives)

Article 2 Discussion:

After a brief discussion, the Commission decided to name the new proposed positions for the City Council councilor-by-ward and councilor-at-large. The Commissions clarified the wording of several other sentences in Sections 2.1 and 2.5.

Section 2.6c: (Rules of Procedures) and 2.9c (Charter Objection): The Commission decided that the number of Councilors necessary to call a special meeting should be four for Section 2.6c and three to charter an item for 2.9c.

Section 2.8d: The Commission decided to add a section to empower the City Council to hire independent legal counsel.

Article 2 and 4: Filling Vacancies

The Commission discussed the proposed language to fill vacancies on the City Council and School Committee in the last nine months of term. Drafted language allows the city council to call a special election to fill the seat in the final 9 months. Lipsitt made a motion to keep the seat vacant for the last nine months of a term, Larner seconded. (8-1, No: Krintzman)

Article 1: Incorporation of the City

Brooke Lipsitt and Bryan Barash suggested adding a preamble to the charter. After a discussion of the proposed language, the Commission decided on a broad statement that defined a set of values for the city.

Article 11: General Provisions

The Commission decided to include the recodification of boards and commissions every five years in sec. 11-4 (Recodification and Publication of Ordinances). A number of the currently listed boards and commissions (90) are inactive so a recodification would weed out those that no longer meet. The committees that complete the recodification of the ordinances and the boards and commissions may, but do not have to be, the same.

The Commission discussed the possibility of requiring a public comment segment to public meetings. Barash made a motion that public bodies shall allow public comment at reasonable intervals and will provide the public with reasonably specific notice as to when public comment will take place, Larner seconded. Lipsitt asked that the motion be divided into two parts, with the division coming after the words “reasonable intervals”. Barash made two motions: one to include the entire statement and the second to end at “reasonable intervals”, Larner **seconded** both motions.

(Motion #1: 7-1-1, no-Haywood; abstain-Manning)

Motion was to add: Public bodies shall allow public comment at reasonable intervals.

(Motion #2: 4-5: no: Manning, Frantz, Haywood, Lipsitt, Kidwell)

Motion was to add onto language from first motion: , and shall provide the public with reasonably specific notice as to when it will accept such public comments.

The audio of this discussion can be found from 1:51-2:31.

The meeting adjourned at 9:35PM

Documentation:

Charter Commission Public Comment (Options)

Article 2 Draft (for Review 5/11/16)

Article 1 Discussion Document

Preamble Examples from Other Towns

Article 11 Additional Sections To be Considered