

**TOWN OF HAMDEN, CONNECTICUT
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
MINUTES OF MEETING**

March 19, 2022

***To view the recording, please click the following link and observe the instructions when/if prompted:**

https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/YS1OYmKTnh6D41buyXsKEqSi-iqIH9Se_LA8h51N24o9v4K8p6bDYVQq9n0Cojew064vJa6UnIr4iCxO-.HApVA0eV3Vesnuko?continueMode=true

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A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was held on Saturday, March 19, 2022 via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

1. Call to Order: 10:39 AM

2. Roll Call

Present: Sarah Gallagher, Chair; Frank Dixon, Vice-Chair; Jackie Downing; Jay Kaye; Y'Isiah Lopes; Laura Santino; Patricia C. Vener – Saavedra, Secretary.

Also in attendance: Steve Mednick, Counsel to Commission

3. Approval of minutes (March 1 2022) Motion: Kaye, 2nd: Santino - no discussion - Unanimous passes.

4. Public Testimony:

Public Comments for CRC can be sent to: CRC2022@hamden.com

Written comments submitted for this meeting can be viewed here:

<https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/5559/03-19-2022>

- Elaine Dove - Because, so many people are interested in commenting we should have 5 day lead for sending the collection of mailed/mailed comments before meetings for boards, commissions and committees. Ms. Dove has noticed Police commission, Planning and Zoning and others have not had materials available to public as well as commission members several days in advance. Example 174 comments for the Police Commission were not received until the night before their meeting.
- Sarah Clark - Re: Elaine's comments; some commissioners of various commissions need the charter to specify Roberts Rules of Order, Freedom Of Information Act, etc documentations commissioners are circulated to all commissioners at beginning point of meetings cycle or whenever a member is newly appointed. Mednick asks if she

wants training and Clark says that would be great! Her proposal is that language about boards and commissions include a requirement that FOIA documentation and Robert's Rules of Order be given to all new members of commissions and that there be refresher courses yearly or so.

- Diane Hoffman - Supports the above two comments saying that these will help professionalize development of commissioners.
- Lawrence Rosenthal (formerly in energy and climate change commission) - (and Cal Shepard) - re: review of Roberts Rules - He did receive these from the Town Clerk when he joined a commission several years ago. Given we are all involved in commissions - these reviews should be ongoing. Would like a requirement that members of a commission have a max number of days for allowed absence. They have some that have missed more than 50% of meetings. There's nothing they can really do about that. The chair at least should have some recourse to get rid of that person.
- Mednick describes a removal provision (7-1.E) We have added a clause that persistent absence is grounds for removal. Can be by Ordinance or individual commissions can themselves adopt Standards of their own and the can ask Mayor to commence discharge of a member. On lack of performance is stated as a "misconduct" because "lack of performance" is too broad.
- Cal Shepard Veterans commission - currently the way appointment process goes, documents go to Town Clerk then Mayor; Requests that the town clerk forward applications to Commissions Chairs so they can approve or not.
- Elaine Dove - Comments on commission attendance - believes charter specifies 3 consecutive meetings as a standard of attendance. Had a member not show up for 2 years running. And someone else did just the bare minimum of attendance. She feels people should have a percentage requirement. Process of dismissal should be clear.
- Steve replies that the Charter does not actually specify any time period.
- Sarah Clark - re: supports Ms. Dove's comments on backup materials. Once a commission has established rules it should be posted on website in interests of transparency.
- Lawrence Rosenthal - Raises the point of minutes recalling they record time of start of meetings, the attendees are listed. Thus have record of people who attend or not.
- Dan Garrett - RE: will his comments in email be addressed today and he advises that he may need to elaborate on it later. Further explains how this played out in New Haven to the detriment of the Democratic Party.

11:14 comments closed

5. **Agenda**

- Response from Jay Kaye to comments - re: documentation for commissioners from their commissions: are there state regulations regarding that? Mednick mentions FOI standards - LC has a deadline for submissions before meetings. Member of board or commission can ask for recess of meeting so that members can peruse documents (48 hours). Any standard can be est. but if it's too strict it will be too inflexible. In 7-B we can state "need a rule regarding X" and the commissions have to establish standards.
- **Chapter VII** – Boards and Commissions (Public Comment; Meeting frequency; Assignment of Clerks; Electronic Access; Appointment Authority and time–frame for Appointments; Twelve-year limits for services on Boards and Commissions; District and Geographic Representation and Diversity Requirements; and Outreach)
 - 7- 1A. Charter should explain to public what roles commissions and boards are. eg, regulatory, policy, etc types of boards and commissions. B discusses numbers of members and expansion and contraction by ordinance based on districts and redistricting.
 - 7-2. Language includes rules discuss comments, frequency of meetings, attendance requirements, etc.
 - Clerk requirement area should include requirement that clerk be responsible for training/distribution of FOI, RRR, or whatever operating rules are in use, for commissioners (especially new ones). Should be in 7-K (Role of TC).
 - Background Public access in section
 - Things for Mednick to work with: time for Commission/Board members to review background materials; Documentation for Public to review after meetings
 - Section C - time frames for Mayoral appts. Standards for case of LC rejecting mayoral appointments and so forth. New: 12 yr cap on service on Boards and Commissions.
 - Downing - Conflict restrictions? Mednick - Finance commission, Board of Ethics, Police Commission and at least another political party officer and a few others cannot go on these boards and commissions. We can look at the party restrictions next meeting (brought up by D Garrett).
 - Group discussion of term limits and non-voting members. Downing finds the "non-voting" aspect questionable and unnecessary.
 - **Kaye moves to strike transition provision from 7-1C(4) Santino 2 Vote - Passes**
 - Mednick: Subsections D and E (Vacancy and Removal) - Resignations that may not necessarily be written. Especially worrisome if Chair says Y resigned and Y says, "No I didn't." But if someone doesn't show up they can just be removed. Persistence absence should be dealt with by Group rules.
 - Lopes and Kaye suggest a removal commission.
 - Santino and Vener-Saavedra feel a Removal Commission would be overkill. The commission chair and clerk should be able to communicate and resolve the absentee problem.
 - Downing likes being more prescriptive about this issue but a Commission may not be the right answer. Define this as part of the role of the chair and the chain of action. Possibly in 7-K.

- Kaye - Given Mayors office and TC are responsible for generating and nominating and assigning clerk that there be recognition of issue. Clerk can notify TC who notifies Mayor of absenteeism.
 - Mednick - In Subsection E there is a statement "request of removal proceeding" to Mayor by Chair or majority of Commissioners. TC can be advised when removal occurs which triggers new appointment process. Agreement discussion is supportive.
- **Chapter VII** – *Finance Commission and Diversity and Equity Inclusion Commission*
 - **Discussion**

Recessed at 12:37 PM until March 23, 2022 (Wednesday) at 8:00 PM

Meeting schedule can be viewed here:

<https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/5428/Hamden-Charter-Commission-Schedule-and-Subject-Matter>

Minutes submitted by Commission Secretary Patricia Vener-Saavedra