

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

(Continuation of the meeting recessed on March 19th)

March 23, 2022

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prompted: https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/GfyqIts28-w87qOfGUSOij19Vdle8jllu4_qyvirBIJ4rqzb8jd8kDxmASK2CenukIv7bP20x5K-Wtm.G8Zy8yM0FOA-7UqM?continue-Mode=true&x_zm_rtaid=jowP3xX4SJ6seEaKgb0Ujw.1648222963261.cde4e48fc8cf9f4bebdcl1d6bdc b4809&x_zm_rhtaid=906

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A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission was held on Wednesday, March 23, 2022 via Zoom due to the Covid-19 Pandemic. This meeting was a continuation of the meeting recessed on March 19 2022.

1. Call to Order: 8:00 PM

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. Public Testimony: There was one comment submitted which can be read here: <https://www.hamden.com/DocumentCenter/View/5590/03-23-2022>

- Ronald Weil – Chair of the Hamden Vets Commission - disagrees with 12 year term limit for Commissions. (See mailed comments) - Says that the limit will cause a loss of institutional knowledge which will curtail their 4 major events per year. It takes people time to advance through the commission and take on leadership rolls.
- no other comments

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

4. Chapter VII – Finance Commission and Diversity and Equity Inclusion Commission Continuing-

- Residency Requirements - There's always been a residential require - now we are requiring district residency.
- Representation on Boards and Commissions - when a mayor moves forward with appointments, the mayor is constrained to be aware of diversity in doing so. This includes geographical as well as all other diversity characteristics. Background experience and expertise should be considered as well. Should not be more than two (2) from any one district. Make it "a best effort" mandate. Flexibility to have up to 2 members from the same LC District for larger Boards and Commissions. The problem is that there are both small (3 member) and larger (over 9 member) boards and commissions.
 - Dixon reminds us that this conversation is not trivial. We don't want to leave the door open so that we fall back to how things have been in previous years.
 - Backgrounds, expertise, ethics are also diversity characteristics
 - **Outcome: Change “should” to “shall” and increase “1” to “2, with reason.”**
- Outreach
- H. Dual appointment prohibition - except for commissions such as ours, ie, temporary duration, external appts representing town
- I. Restrictions for Members of Civil Service, Finance, Board of Ethics, Police Commission. Mednick suggests - Fire commission should be added to that list. Because they actually do act on hires and promotions in their department.
 - Santino - being part of a committee there could be conflict of Interest.
 - Kaye - is unsure of wording.
 - **Outcome: Fire Commission is to be added and the language will be revised to be clear that political party leaders are included in the list of restricted people.**
- Section K was expanded a lot. Mednick says we should talk to TC about it. We are trying to fix TC office to be actively keeping records and informing Mayor of upcoming essential charter tasks. Also role of Mayor in the Administration of B and C. We need to figure out where LC falls in here where they are the appointing body.
 - Downing - For K1c -looked for clarity on a statement and Mednick confirms. But it needs a bit of statement update to be imminent.
 - K-3. There should be publication and updated list of Boards and Commissions should be both in November and May posted. (public notice) at least 2 weeks before positions are to be filled. Besides posting the list Gallagher would like a current list posted all the time. Downing - In May and November believes Boards and Commissions are updated daily as needed when there are changes. Option for residents to apply to any Board and Commission in both M and N to have an applicant pool.
 - P. Vener-Sevedra asked for clarification which Gallagher gave: 1) transparency list, 2) constant updated list of Boards and Commissions and 3) twice yearly recruitment for a pool of applicants.
 - Kaye - once a vacancy is created "within 72 hours" or "immediately" the Mayor should notify public. Mednick - people need some time to apply. Kaye - will they

have time? Because Mayor could immediately to pool and pick someone the very next day. Gallagher - Trigger for notice should be vacancy "no more than 72 hours after Mayor is notified of Vacancy."

- Downing - residents often will write a letter stating interest in commissions. Ex. passionate interest can be most important. Is TC updated vacancies at all times. and twice a year ask for applicant pools. Do we still have to give notice for a two week wait to gather new applicants? Mednick - should May and Nov be for notice of positions coming up for new appointment?
- Kaye - going back to public notice. Appt is not a slam duck and has to go to LC for vote. By giving public notice other people can go to the appropriate LC meeting to learn more and maybe give testimony.
- Side note - Charter required commissions: Add charter mandated energy commission? Mednick - add a new commission later.
- Gallagher "in May and Nov of each year Mayor shall post all boards and Commissions." Downing - not just those with vacancies –
- **Outcome: Mednick will highlight this, move the last paragraph in K to the section 1, and tie the posting to 72 hours after vacancy.**
- For the paragraph K3c. Needs to be a provision if there are no volunteers on the list. Mednick: want to add, "if any." Gallagher is not convinced it's needed.
- 4 Additional Outreach paragraph - get out and build list

- **Finance Commission** - they just look at numbers and report to LC

4a Budget prep and oversight - Provide LC with an entity that tracks all the finance numbers so LC members don't. It's simultaneous with LC to provide information to assist LC with evaluation. This is ongoing throughout the year. They can report to LC or Mayor but themselves can't do anything. 6 year terms staggered. Members develop expertise.

- **4b Reporting function** -

- **4c Collective Bargaining agreements** - Language added to be sure numbers that are being used in bargaining to make sure fiscal impact stays real. Needed because Town accepted numbers from a Union that was off by a million dollars. This Commission would have forestalled that. Town atty thought this took away from Mayor's power.

- Gallagher wants they "may" become a "shall". Downing thinks things move too quickly in negotiations. It's too immediate and impractical. Mednick - Mayors need to be able to say "I need to go consult with my commission." Downing agrees. Dixon and I agree Kaye does not like the word "status" would rather have "fiscal impact" more specifically. Mednick offers an alternate wording. "operational and fiscal impacts." instead of "status."
- **Outcome: Change "may" to "shall" and Change "status" to "operational"**
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- Disclose funding policies so that pensions etc are properly funded.
- Other structural aspects are clear and don't need discussion. Including best practices and standards adherence.
- Dixon - core purpose of this commission came about from feedback by town re: long history of fiscal "mistakes" of past town gov'ts. Many Officials did not have the expertise to be effective

- Lopes - town needs to deliver public services in a responsible manner and this will aid in that aspect.
 - Gallagher – Ask if there were other issues in the section. **Outcome: There was general consensus on the section. Mednick will make the changes and we can vote on it next meeting.**
- **Other Commission and Boards**
 - Library board had changes - expanded to be a 9 member board at their request to include one person from each LC district. They also want Director to be appointed by Mayor. Training requirement was added..
 - **Inland wetlands commission** - CRC added 1 alternate by request of this commission
 - **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Commission** - newly established. Mednick gives history because it's a new commission drawn up by the 2021 CRC.
 - Gallagher - asks for thoughts and comments
 - Downing - this commission looks at policies and practices to make sure decisions are aware of equity needs when services are being offered. It makes sure everything is done with equity in mind.
 - Gallagher, Mednick, Kaye – report date and transition dates for everything need to be aligned with the dates they are now likely going to be relevant for, with the passing of this charter.
 - Discussed of term limit of 12 years based on public comment. All agree to retain the 12 year limit as proposed in the charter revision.
 - **Mandatory Commissions list**
 - Gallagher asks if there are 8 or is this is a list of topics. Mednick seems to think they are a list of topics. Gallagher will send the list of boards and commissions for the commission members to review.
 - Vener-Saavedra needs to decide if proposed alternative energy resources (and etc) need to be brought up separately or if they already fit within the scope of what already exists.

Next Meeting is on Tuesday, March 29. Agenda will include:

- Expert Panel Re: Police Commission Revisions
- Invite Comment from Chief and Chair of Police Commission
- Walk through police commission language
- Finalize the sections in this meeting
 - Talk through term limits section

Time adjourned: 10:29 PM Motion: Gallagher, Second: Vener-Saavedra

Next meeting: Tuesday, March 29th at 7:00 P.M.

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 C Vener-Saavedra