

COMMENTS SUBMITTED FOR THE CHARTER REVISION PUBLIC HEARING

May 18, 2021

My husband and I are opposed to the the civilian review board for the police dept. it should not be entitled to any of the police budget, it sounds much to powerful. Not what the town needs at all.

Linda and William Anderson

Mountain Rd

Hamden. Ct. 06514

Dear Commission members, Commission Chair and Attorney Mednick:

I read the proposed new document and with a few exceptions for typos, I think it is a well-written Charter that will put Hamden on a more equitable and fair path going forward. I especially like the changes made to include a Finance Commission. I like the formal creation of a Chief Operating Officer that legitimizes the "Administrative Executive" that has been used by recent mayors. All of the specific documentation regarding ethics, Commission responsibilities, distribution of Commission members from all Legislative Districts for certain commissions and the creation of a Diversity Commission is very forward thinking. I like the specific information regarding the Budget process from the Mayor's office to the Finance Commission and finally to the Legislative Council. This Charter will serve us well into the next 10 years and creates a platform for future Charter Revisions.

Your work was well done and thoughtful. I appreciate every minute you spent on making this a Charter that Hamden can be proud to have. I fully support its adoption by the Legislative Council.

Sincerely,

Elaine Dove
Santa Fe Ave.
Hamden, CT

Good evening Honorable Members of the Charter Revision Commission,

I want to first take a moment to thank each one of you for your time and effort in creating this document. You have done amazing work and Hamden owes you a deep debt of gratitude for your service. I will be in attendance to speak to you in person, and will deliver these remarks verbatim, but wanted to offer you this testimony in writing as well.

Should we be able to vote to choose the elected officials that represent us?

I would imagine your answer is yes, and you were probably a little concerned that I even asked. It is the core value of our Republic and what it stands for. I believe there may be an issue in the way that we choose our At-Large candidates for Legislative Council and I'd like to speak on it briefly. Before I get started, let me be clear - minority representation is incredibly important and we ought to protect it. I am in favor of maintaining the current maximum of 4 officials from the same party. Tyranny of the Majority is a real thing, and everyone in Hamden must be represented on our Legislative body. As such, neither party should be able to nominate more than 4 candidates for the 6 At-Large seats.

Currently, each of us is represented by 7 Council members, but we only get to vote for 5 of those seats. As you know, each of us is represented by our district representative and the 6 At-Large members that are chosen by our electorate townwide. The problem is, when each of us enters our voting booths in November, we are greeted by instructions that tell us to "Vote For Any Four" of the At-Large candidates listed even though 6 winners will be chosen and end up representing us. The result is that each of us here in Hamden is directly represented by 2 local legislators whose seats we did not have the opportunity to vote for.

At one time, this was likely a well-intentioned clause. At this point, however, we must recognize it as the antiquated language that keeps us from our right to vote for those who represent us. For comparison, we are all represented by 1 US House Representative and 2 US Senators. Each time those elections come around, we are allowed a vote for each seat. It is the most basic value of democracy. Imagine, if you will, that you only had a vote in 2 of those elections, and had to chose one to sit out. That is what Hamden residents are asked to do at the polls every odd year.

After consultation with a number of attorneys, I believe that the way to rectify this is to allow each voter to "Vote For Any Six" while maintaining the cap of 4 candidates from both parties. This maintains minority representation, while no longer denying us our right to vote for 2 of the seats that represent us at Town Hall.

I will be happy to answer any questions if your rules allow when I step up to provide testimony, and I am always available at 203-927-1075. Attorney Mednick and I have discussed this extensively and he is also capable and confident in discussing the dilemma.

Thank you ahead of time for your efforts to fortify our voting process here in Hamden. I sincerely appreciate the work you have all done, and I am looking forward to the Council's role in supporting that work.

In solidarity,

Brad Macdowall

Legislative Councilmember
Hamden, Connecticut