

PUBLIC COMMENT FOR CRC JULY 20, 2021

Dear Charter Revision Commissioners:

While I understand that there is no Public Comments for this CRC July 20th Meeting, I believe my name was mentioned during the last meeting as to my thoughts on:

COMMISSION DISCUSSION: BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS:

(A) LCR #11 POST-MEETING COMMENT

I would like to make a slight change to the Item – Public Comment Prior to and Following Meetings.

Reasons for Change:

In several meetings I have attended, after the Initial Public Input at the beginning of the Agenda, mistakes have been made on Agenda items by Council Members / Department Members or Commissioners based on incorrect interpretation of information or analysis of wrong data.

These mistakes have led to decisions / next steps/ delays and public frustration (since the Public is only allowed to provide Public Input at the beginning of the meeting).

Follow-up on already approved incorrect Agenda Items is very time consuming and wasteful.

My recommendations to correct these issues are:

1) Keep the Public Input Session as an Agenda item at the beginning of the meeting -written input followed by 3 minutes / person for Oral input.

2) **When an Agenda item is discussed, the Chair asks the Public, “Are there any Points of Clarification?”**

- a. **Public cannot repeat what they have already written or said (not repeating entire Public Comment).**
- b. **Public can only correct something the Council Members / Department Members or Commissioners have stated that might be incorrect.**
- c. **Public can respond if the Chair asks for a clarification on an Agenda Item if there is initial uncertainty what the item is.**
- d. **Public’s response is for only 3 minutes maximum.**

I feel that my above recommendations make sense to address the concerns I have listed above from a process improvement perspective and will lead to more efficient meetings with less frustration for all.

So, while I do agree with Sarah Clark and Diane Hoffman that there need to be a public comment session both prior to the commencement and following the completion of all business, **I feel that this last public input should be reserved for:**

- 1) Follow up questions on an agenda item.**
- 2) Next Steps / Timelines on decisions made on their Agenda item(s).**
- 3) Important information not listed in the Agenda that needs to be shared with the Councils / Commissions / Public.**

A concern has been raised that adding additional public comments may add to the length of meetings. But I have suggestions for how meetings could be run more efficiently, which would give adequate time for additional public input.

I ask those to look at how their meetings are currently conducted and see where time could be saved / process improved:

Some of my suggestions would be:

- 1) Start your meeting on time.**
 - a. Many meetings do not start till 10-20 minutes after the announced start time.**
 - b. The reason given is that the panelists are not available till then.**
 - i. But guest speakers and the public are in attendance on time.**
 - c. This lost time at the beginning of the meeting could be used to allow the additional Public Comments and still end the meeting at the designated time.**
- 2) Limit Committee / Commissioners comments to 2 - 3 minute periods per agenda item.**
- 3) Be aware of meeting time and move the conversations along.**
- 4) When it is obvious that discussion on an Agenda item has been exhausted, move the item for a vote.**
- 5) When folks are nominated for a position and been accepted, ask Committee Members to write their approval comments to be viewed as comment for that meeting.**

So, in Summary Public Comment would like something like this:

1) Initial Public Input – would remain the same

2) New Public Inputs:

a. Agenda Public Input:

i. **Points of Clarification**

b. End of Meeting Public Input:

i. **Follow up questions on an agenda item.**

ii. **Next Steps / Timelines on decisions made on their
Agenda item(s).**

iii. **Important information not listed in the Agenda
that needs to be shared with the Councils / Commissions / Public.**

I genuinely believe that if the Charter Revision for this Item were to include these additional chances for the public to supply additional information or gather information post decisions, your meetings will be more efficient, less frustration and productive for all.

My final comment is that based upon current Public Input, very few residents make comments. I feel that by including these additional opportunities to speak, this partnership between the Committees / Commission / Boards will go a long way, possibly lead to increase interest in becoming a Commissioner.

Kim...could you please send this to all the CRC members – it pertains to an item on the July 20th Agenda. And also, would you please send me a confirmation email.

Thank you,

Phil Cronan (representing myself)

- President Hamden Plains Friends Civic Group
- Commissioner, Hamden's Technology Commission

To the members of the Charter Revision Commission,

First thank you for all the time spent working through the charter and dealing with the various revisions included. This being the 5th one I've been in Town for, I appreciate the time it takes.

I am writing to address one item: the mayoral term. In one section of the proposed charter [5-1; page 46] you have kept the language "At each general Town election, a Mayor shall be chosen by the Electors of the Town." A method which has served us well. Yet, on page 25; [section3-3, c 1b] you have inserted a proposed revision as follows: "Commencing at twelve noon on the last Sunday of November following the election in 2023 and quadrennially thereafter, the Mayor shall hold office for a term of four (4) years,"

The only vague reference I have seen, in a clipping back some time ago, given as a reason was someone's opinion that Mayor's can't work for the Town's interest because they start campaigning for the next election shortly after being inaugurated.

Having known all of the Mayors except the first John DeNicola, Sr. and having served with 4 of them, I can safely say they don't.

Reviewing the membership of your committee, I believe I only find one former Council person. Mr. Hul. And, he served the Town well but for only a short term. That may have limited your direct experience with our Mayors

My opinions, which follow, are based on having served 12 years on the Council [1987 through 1993 and 2007 to 2009 representing the 2nd District and 1999 through 2003] and two years as Registrar of Voters. I've been around for this discussion before many times. Having covered this ground before, I must say that I am very much opposed to extending the term.

Most mayor's at some point decide that the Council, the fiscal and legislative authority, are merely preventing them from doing what they want. And, at sometime, a conflict with the council, or even taxpayers, has developed. I'm merely asking that you leave the citizens with the power to remove the Mayor at the end of two years if they are not satisfied with the way the Town is being run. Are the mayor's concerned with getting re-elected? Yes indeed. But, it, usually, occurs during the last 4 to 5 months of the term. And, it's, in my experience, been a benefit to the Town because, Democrat or Republican, they try to do positive things.

Therefore, I repeat my request. Do not alter, or extend, the two year Mayoral term which has served the Town so well for 56 years.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,

John P. Flanagan