

Charter Review Committee (CRC)
Town of Groton, Groton, MA 01450 978-448-1111

Meeting Minutes - March 15, 2017
First Floor Meeting Room, Groton Town Hall

Present (4): Jane Allen, John Giger (Secretary), Michael Manugian (Chair), Michael McCoy

Not present: Robert Collins, Bud Robertson (Vice-Chair), Stuart Schulman

Recorder: Stephen Legge

Visitors: none

Call to Order: Chairman Manugian called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

Administrative:

Mr. Manugian announced the Committee would defer approving minutes of the last three meetings to a later time so more members may participate since only four were present.

Discussion of Outstanding Issues from Last Week's Public Hearings:

Mr. Manugian said the only remaining issue to discuss is the development of language for revised Charter Section 3.9, regarding the Town Clerk's elected position. Mr. Bouchard made suggestions at the morning public hearing on March 8th, the Committee decided to accept the substance of his comments and Mr. Collins had an action item to develop the language. Mr. Manugian asked the Committee to decide this evening on the language.

Mr. Manugian moved to accept the Town Clerk's language as given for Section 3.9 and written below. Ms. Allen seconded. The language is as follows:

"3.9: Town Clerk

There shall be a Town Clerk elected for a term of three years who shall have all of the duties established by the General Laws, and shall be the Records Access Officer pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 66 of the General Laws."

A vote was taken and the motion was approved unanimously.

This was intended to be the last change adopted by the Committee for the draft revised Charter for the Spring Town Meeting.

Discussion of Preparations for Presentation to the BOS and Finance Committee at March 22nd Meeting:

Action Item #1: Mr. Manugian will draft the final revised Charter version by Friday March 17th.

Action Item #2: The Committee members will give comments to Mr. Manugian concerning the draft presentation and the draft final Charter by Monday March 20th.

Mr. Manugian said he will give the presentation to the Selectmen and the Finance Committee on Wednesday March 22nd, and the Committee will answer any questions. Committee members will stand by to answer questions as follows: Mr. Robertson for matters of finance, Mr. Collins for matters relating to the BOS and the Town Manager, and Mr. Giger for matters relating to the transparency of Town government. Mr. Giger will bring the three binders he has prepared for the Town Clerk's office with the latest flagged version of the revised Charter in each one.

A review was conducted by the Committee for recent action items completed.

Mr. Giger sent out the invitation to the Finance Committee for the presentation next week and copied the Town Manager.

The Town Manager suggested considering the 2nd Floor conference room to accommodate more people at next week's meeting. Mr. Giger put a hold on the 2nd Floor conference room, but also kept the 1st Floor conference room for now, since it was a better room to use for the Committee's purposes. The Committee will plan to use the 1st floor room and will move the meeting to the 2nd floor if the number of attendees exceeds the capacity of the 1st floor room.

Mr. Manugian questioned why additional members of the public might come to this meeting. Mr. Giger thought they might come to question the BOS about the new Charter provisions.

Discussion of Preparations for April 5th Public Hearings:

Hearings will be held in the 2nd Floor conference room at 10:00 AM and 7:00 PM.

Mr. Giger suggested re-titling the "public hearings" to "public presentations" to set expectations that the Charter text has been frozen and the purpose is to primarily present the proposed changes and answer questions. Mr. Manugian added the Committee will be open to hearing comments from the public.

Mr. Manugian asked Mr. Giger to submit announcements for the hearings to the newspapers for next week, including the Groton Herald, the Nashoba Valley Voice, the Lowell Sun and the talkaboutgroton community website.

Action Item #3: Mr. Manugian will develop agendas for the April 5th public hearings. He will also draft deadlines for documents and the revised meeting schedule for the Committee.

Action Item #4: Comments have not yet been received from Attorney Lauren Goldberg or Town Counsel on the latest version of the revised Charter. Mr. Manugian will check on this.

Discussion of Preparations for Town Meeting and a Ballot Question:

Mr. Manugian reported that Mr. Collins is still checking with Town Counsel on the wording for the ballot question for the revised Charter.

The deadline for the flagged version of the Charter for Town Meeting printing is March 29th.

The deadline for filing the flagged final version of the revised Charter with the Town Clerk is April 5th.

Mr. Manugian will check on the status of the ballot question wording with Mr. Collins. Next week the Committee will consider and decide the ballot question wording.

Action Item #5: Next week the Committee will inform the BOS the Charter Review Committee wishes to have a ballot question for the Town. The deadline for filing the ballot question wording with the BOS is March 23rd.

Mr. McCoy said in his discussion with the Town Manager, Mr. Haddad recommended using the flagged version of the Charter for the Town Meeting. The Committee agreed that this version makes the text additions and deletions explicit. The Committee discussed the possibility that there could be one or more amendments to the Charter from the Town Meeting floor.

Mr. Giger brought up the subject of how to renumber and re-title the version of the revised Charter presented at Town Meeting. He suggested calling it Version 1.0 for the sake of simplicity.

Mr. Giger wanted to be sure that the Committee can obtain a timely record of the Town Meeting proceedings, in order to capture the exact wording of any possible Charter amendments in order to properly update the text of the Charter.

Action Item #6: Mr. Giger will ask the Town Clerk about the process of obtaining formal minutes for the meeting for the Committee (and the public). He will also approach Bob Colman, Program Director of the Cable Channel to inquire about the availability of (and timing for) a DVD of the proceedings.

It was noted Mr. Legge will be needed to take notes for weekly meetings up to Town Meeting, but no formal minutes will be taken by the Committee at Town Meeting.

Action Item #7: Mr. Collins will ask Attorney Lauren Goldberg if there is a downside to the Town going to a ballot on the revised Charter approved by Town Meeting.

Action Item #8: Mr. Collins will continue to talk with Counsel about the proper steps to take if one or more amendments are made to the final draft revised Charter at Town Meeting.
(Note: This is a repeat of AI #6 from the March 1st, 2017 meeting).

Action Item #9: Mr. Manugian asked that Mr. Collins check with the town Moderator for his suggestions on what would need to be done by the Committee to deal with changes made on Town Meeting floor. Specifically, the Committee will require authorization to make any additional changes to the Charter required to make other parts of the document consistent with

changes made at Town Meeting. Mr. Manugian speculated that a motion from Town Meeting floor empowering the Committee may be required to accomplish this.

Mr. Manugian asked if the Committee wished to reconsider whether the revised Charter should be voted on in sections or via a single vote on the entire document. Ms. Allen and Mr. McCoy felt that the document should be voted on in its entirety. This was the consensus of the Committee.

The meeting was adjourned with unanimous consent at 7:57 PM.

**** The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 22nd, at 7:00 PM. ****