**CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING**

**MINUTES**

**MARCH 6, 2025**

**Present:** Peter Cunningham, Chair; Rebecca Weksner, Vice Chair; Mark Haddad, Clerk; Brenden Mahoney; Bob Collins ; Michael Sulprizio

**Members Absent:** Kristen Frank

**Also Present:** Rebecca Pine, Select Board Member; Dawn Dunbar, Town Clerk; Melisa Doig, HR Director; Judy Anderson

Chair Cunningham called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. Chair Cunningham presented the Agenda for the meeting.

**Park Commission Issue**

Chair Cunningham re-introduced the issue of the Park Commission. This is the last issue that needs to be reviewed and considered by the Charter Review Committee. The Committee was deadlocked at the last meeting and he would like to have it resolved.

*Chair Cunningham made a motion to have the Park Commission remain elected. Mr. Collins seconded the motion.*

Discussion – Mr. Sulprizio stated that the proposal to have the Park Commission become appointed had merit to move forward and believed that the Town should have the choice to decide. He wanted the voters to decide the issue. While Mr. Collins agreed with Mr. Sulprizio, he believed it was politically expedient to leave it as elected. Mr. Collins was leery that this issue will derail all the important issues that the Charter Committee has been working on. Chair Cunningham felt there could be fall out at Town Meeting by individuals upset with changing the Park Commission to appointed. Ms. Pine, a member of the Select Board, recommended against bringing this forward as she felt it would take up too much time at Town Meeting and take away from the other important issues before the Town Meeting.

Chair Cunningham was concerned that individuals in Town are stating that the reason that this was brought forward was because it would be easier to remove someone from the Park Commission. Dr. Weksner vehemently disagreed with that statement and stated that it is unfortunate that it is being portrayed that way. She stated that the reason it was brought forward was having it as an elected Board was a barrier to participation and this proposal would make participation consistent with many other appointed Boards. She wanted to set the record straight and refute the inaccurate statements being made about this proposal. Mr. Sulprizio agreed with Dr. Weksner.

Chair Cunningham called the vote: *3 In favor (Cunningham, Collins, Haddad); 3 against (Sulprizio, Weksner, Mahoney). Motion Defeated.*

Since the Committee was split on the issue and no action was taken, the Charter Review Committee will not be recommending any change to the status of the Park Commission and it shall remain elected. Mr. Haddad stated that he would remove the placeholder article on the Warrant relative to this issue. Dr. Weksner wanted to be clear that the reason this was brought forward was to streamline the appointment process, and not to make it easier to remove individuals from the Park Commission. The whole point of the Charter Review Committee was to review the Charter and make recommendations to Town Meeting that the Committee felt merited consideration. She wanted that to be abundantly clear to the residents.

**Review Red-Lined Version of Charter**

Mr. Haddad presented the red-lined version of the Charter that had all the proposed changes voted by the Committee. The Committee made minor changes to the wording, including updating the definition of “Publish” and adding the words “Pursuant to the policy established by the Select Board” in Section 4.2 (iii) (appointment of the Police Chief, Fire Chief and Town Clerk).

Mr. Collins wanted the Board to reconsider their decision to allow paid Town employees to serve on the Select Board. He had heard from many residents who were against this change and upon further reflection he wanted to leave the restriction in the Charter.

*Mr. Collins moved to reconsider the vote that removed the words “a select board member shall not hold another position of the town that is compensated and eligible for medical benefits during the member’s term of office” from Section 3.2.1 of the Groton Charter. Mr. Haddad seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.*

*Mr. Haddad moved to make no changes to Section 3.2.1 of the Groton Charter and leave the wording prohibiting paid town employees from serving on the Select Board. Mr. Collins second the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.*

**Public Hearing**

The Committee reviewed the process for the Public Hearing to be held on March 27th. It was decided that Chair Cunningham would present the red-lined version of the Charter and the Committee would accept feedback/comments from the public. Mr. Collins requested that the hearing be set up as a hybrid meeting to allow for greater participation.

**Minutes**

*Mr. Haddad moved to approve the minutes from the February 20, 2025. Mr. Collins seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.*

Being no further business, Chair Cunningham adjourned the meeting at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Haddad, Clerk