



TOWN OF NEWINGTON

200 GARFIELD STREET
NEWINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06111

OFFICE OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

2022 Charter Revision Commission Public Hearing

March 9, 2022

This meeting will be presented as a Zoom Webinar/Meeting.

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John O. Harpie
Town Clerk

To provide an opportunity for interested individuals to express their views regarding recommended changes or suggestions to the Town of Newington Charter.

Chairman Harpie called the public hearing to order at 7:00 p.m

Public Participation

- Jim Perotti, 175 Hillcrest Avenue. Think the suggestion regarding staggered terms for people running is a great idea. Think suggestion about moving to 4 year terms, not a good idea, 2 years is better, if needed they can run again. Another suggestion, elections currently on odd years; low participation; maybe look into having the elections on even years as well, maybe getting more people out and voting.
- Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. This is the third Charter Revision meetings she has attended. First time, public hearings were to meet the letter of the law. Hope people attend meetings, see many comments on Facebook, come in person (or via phone) and state your concerns/opinions. Currently the Town Attorney is an appointment by mayor, would like to see that go out to bid to take politics out of the position.
- Chairman Harpie stated that they will be having a number of work sessions and we will provide those dates to the public. This is the first public hearing, following procedures set by statute. We were provided 13 charges by the council. Second public hearing will probably be late April; we will be presenting a written draft, will be available to review prior to being given to the council. Council will review and come back to commission with any changes, if necessary, the commission may accept changes or not. Want to be transparent in this process. Look for the public input, it's very important and many changes may have long term impact.

Public Participation

- Susan Mazzoccoli, 149 Harris Drive. From the past, remember changes to the Charter and went to referendum, voting for all changes, not individual changes. Would we be voting for changes individually or as one document?
- Town Clerk Krupinski stated that the statute allows for completed charter or individual questions to be placed in front of the voters; the council will determine whether or not it will be the entire charter or multiple questions.
- Chairman Harpie stated that we are charged with looking at the entire Charter. The focus of this public hearing is to hear from the public; maybe beneficial to public to review the 13 items charged by the council.

- Commissioner Capello read the following:
 1. Include a mandated review of the charter every ten years. Set up committee make up and time frame for review.
 2. Review and update referendum limits to bring them in line with current expenditure amounts C-408, page 9 Define Special Appropriation.
 3. Review Article VI and look at the number of members, specifically Parks and Rec (11 Members) page 13-15.
 4. Review the document for ambiguous terms like shall and may and make them clearer
 5. Review and clarify Article IX Personnel. Specify who has control over BOE personnel. C-903 page 24.
- Commissioner Borrup read the following:
 6. Change time on Council Organizational meeting to 7:00 C-403 page 8.
 7. Specify how Commission and Board members can be removed if they do not attend meetings or we are unable to contact them or conduct unbecoming a Board or Commission member.
 8. Review the language for C-603 Library Trustees. ‘Selected by town’? page 14.
- Commissioner Minor read the following:
 9. Look at all numbers in the charter related to amounts required for referenda, bidding requirements etc. and determine if appropriate.
 10. Review staggered terms for council and board of education and other town boards
 11. Review residency requirements for Town Planner, Police Chief.
- Commissioner Gonsalves read the following:
 12. Review language in **C-410. Right of Referendum on Ordinances**, to ensure that the existing language and timeline is properly outlined.
 13. Review language in **C-609. Auditor**, to include by reference the Audit Committee, currently created under Resolution 2021-58. Recommend approval of Code language to outline duties of the Audit Committee.
- Chairman Harpie stated these are the charges of the council brought to us. We also have the liberty of putting our own footprint on it by coming up with different concepts as we review the Charter, mindful that we need to stay within the statutes and proper legal language. All aware of the work we need to put into this.
- Commissioner Capella read the following:

Charter revisions are an important part of local governance of Connecticut. For cities and towns like ours, it’s a proof positive way for local officials and residents to review and access our procedures and priorities so as to compare them with in other communities as we strive to provide the most transparent and efficient government possible.

Public Participation

- Mathew Rossi, 17 Franklin Circle. Wondering if you can look into how Independent’s are given opportunities to serve on certain commissions; think by adding Independent’s will help to alleviate politics; to allow more participation by Independents into choices that are made.

- Rose Lyons, 46 Elton Drive. I'd like to see if there could be public participation at the beginning and end of your agenda. Did the town clerk share the department heads recommendations that were given at town council meeting. Know that two or three things suggested by department heads. Wondering if there could be some kind of awareness that this is going on; maybe have a written article with process, not just thirteen charges, if people are aware and don't come forward, shame on them.
- Town Clerk Krupienski stated that he and the chairman will be sitting down and discussing the meeting layout and public participation will be part of the agenda. The suggestions (4) by department heads will be shared at the first regular meeting of the commission which is scheduled for March 15 at 6:30 p.m.
- Chairman Harpie that we will repeat the process at the beginning of each meeting.
- Mayor DelBuono stated she was happy people were participating and hopes that more people will weigh in. This is an important process for our town. Appreciate efforts already. Have seen a lot on Facebook and heard a lot around town and will continue to try and get the word out so more people can weigh in if they wish. Appreciate commissioners volunteering for this process, something that will live on for many years.

Chairman Harpie adjourned the public hearing at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Gibbon
Recording Clerk –2022 Charter Revision Commission

**Pursuant to §805 of the Town of Newington Charter*