

# Charter Review Committee - Remote Meeting

3/24/2021 - Minutes

## 1. Call To Order And Pledge Of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm. The pledge of allegiance was said.

Attendance (Charter Review Committee Members attended via remote connection): Matt Jussaume (Chair), Caroline Ahdab (Vice Chair), Ramona Reed (Clerk), John Ladik, Harvey Serreze, Marilyn Tremblay, Absent: Bob Newton

## 2. Acceptance Of Minutes

The minutes from meetings on 2/24/2021 and 3/10/2021 were reviewed.

### Minutes from 2/24/2021

Marilyn Tremblay made a motion, seconded by Caroline Ahdab, to accept the meetings minutes from 2/24/2021. The motion was unanimously accepted by the CRC members in attendance at that meeting: Ramona Reed, Harvey Serreze, Caroline Ahdab, Marilyn Tremblay, Matt Jussaume Abstained: John Ladik

### Minutes from 3/10/2021

Marilyn Tremblay made a motion, seconded by Caroline Ahdab, to accept the meetings minutes from 3/10/2021. The motion was unanimously accepted by the CRC members in attendance at that meeting: Marilyn Tremblay, Ramona Reed, Matt Jussaume Abstained: John Ladik, Caroline Ahdab, Harvey Serreze

## 3. Public Comments On The Agenda

None

## 4. Public Feedback Received

None

## 5. Discussion / Action Items

### 5.1. Action Item Follow-Up - Review Response To Master Plan Committee's Request For Info (M. Jussaume)

The CRC discussed the response we would make to a request received from the Town Master Plan Committee. The Master Plan Committee emailed Matt Jussaume on March 4, 2021 asking for a status on their recommendation in their Master Plan Implementation Tracker for item 8.13:

"8.13 - Update and revise the town charter to reflect current operations, and managerial, board, and committee duties, roles and responsibilities."

**Motion:** A motion was made by Marilyn Tremblay to draft the response advising that the CRC is in progress and 65% of the Master Plan Committee's recommendation is completed. During the discussion, not all CRC members were in agreement about how much was left to meet the recommendation.

**Motion Amended:** Caroline Ahdab amended the motion to advise that the CRC is in progress and 75% of the Master Plan Committee's recommendation is completed. Marilyn Tremblay seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Matt will reply as follows on behalf of the CRC:

"We are in progress and 75% complete. The status is: Charter revisions for relevant portions of articles 2 Legislative Branch, 3 Elected Officials, 4 Town Administrator, and 5 Administrative Organization have been drafted. A final refinement will be needed for completion".

## 5.2. Continue Review Of Section 7.8 - General Provisions/Procedures Governing Mult. Member Bodies & Subsequent Sections, Time Permitting

item b - The discussion resumed with Section 7-8: Procedures Governing Multiple Member Bodies. At the CRC meeting on 2/24/2021, during the discussion of Section 7-8 item b, Caroline Ahdab asked if a requirement could be added to the Charter that stipulated that committees must allow 30 minutes at each open meeting for the public to provide comments, if there were public attendees who wished to provide feedback. Also, time limits per speaker and other requirements could be specified.

At this meeting, Caroline presented a write-up of some ideas and asked the CRC for feedback. She also suggested that there might be a different Charter section that is more appropriate for this issue. The CRC discussed this. Various questions and concerns were presented, including whether the Charter requiring that multiple member bodies allow time for public comments would conflict with the Mass. Open Meeting Law, Public Participation section. This was asked again by Ramona Reed.

Pepperell resident, Paula Terrasi, reminded that in addition to public Open Meetings, there are legal requirements for Public Hearings, so those should be considered as well when discussing requirements for the Charter.

Near the end of the discussion, Matt Jussaume asked Caroline and the committee how the ideas discussed might be formulated into a motion. The following was considered:

"to have the Charter require public comment opportunity at all Town multiple member body meetings and public hearings".

After further discussion, not all CRC members were in agreement about incorporating this requirement. John Ladik drafted verbiage suggesting that the Charter text should be: "Chairpersons of multiple member bodies are encouraged to allow comments from the public."

**Motion:** Caroline Ahdab made a motion, seconded by Marilyn Tremblay, to add the following as the last sentence in Section 7.8, Item b - Rules and Journals: "***Chairpersons of multiple member bodies are encouraged to allow comments from the public.***" The motion carried unanimously.

7.8 items c and d - no changes

7.8 e - Filling of Vacancies - no changes were suggested for this item, however the CRC questioned whether town or state regulations required that appointed members of multiple member bodies be town residents. If this wasn't required by other laws, the committee discussed whether the Charter should still require town residency. No decision was made, and this will be added to our list to revisit later.

**Action:** Marilyn Tremblay will ask the Town Clerk for further advice on residency requirements.

The Charter review will continue with Section 7.10, Loss of Office, Excessive Absence, at the next CRC meeting, and subsequent sections will follow, as time permits. Additionally, if time permits, after the review of Article 8, we will begin our review of the list we created of complex issues that need further discussion.

## 5.3. Start Review Of Previously Tabled Complex Issues, Time Permitting

There was no time to discuss this item so it will be deferred to a future meeting.

## 6. Other Matters Which Could Not Be Reasonably Anticipated 48 Hours Prior To

## Meeting

None

## 7. Adjournment

Marilyn Tremblay motioned to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Harvey Serreze. By unanimous vote, the meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm. The next Charter Review Committee Meeting will be scheduled for Weds., April 7, 2021, at 7 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Ramona Reed, Clerk, Charter Review Committee