

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
KILLINGWORTH, CT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES*
February 1, 2021
Conducted as a Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting

Members Present: Robert Rimmer (Chair), Joan Gay, Nancy Gorski, Mary Casey Jacob, Mary Meixell.

Members Absent: Walter Adametz.

Others Present: Catherine Iino, Kathleen Zandi, Elizabeth Disbrow (until 7:57), Lucinda Hogarty (until 7:30), David Meixell (until 7:30), Kristi LiDonni, Laura Lefko, Eileen Blewitt, and Shauna Ham, clerk.

1) Call to order. At 7:01pm, Chairman Rimmer called the meeting to order.

2) Public input. None.

3) Welcome New Member – Kathy Zandi.

K Zandi was not yet sworn in, so she could participate in discussion but not vote.

4) Approval of January 19, 2021 minutes.

The minutes were reviewed and no amendments were made.

Motion: MC Jacob moved to approve the minutes of January 19, 2021. J Gay seconded.

Vote: Four in favor, none opposed, N Gorski abstained. Motion passed, 4-0-1.

5) Survey Update. (discussed after agenda item #7)

- M Meixell shared the final version of the survey, which is ready for distribution.
- N Gorski will create a Charter Revision Gmail account, so that the public can reach out to the Commission in one central local (as opposed to individual members' emails); as Secretary, she will be charged with monitoring the account, but all members will have access. The group Gmail will be included in the survey announcement notices. Also added to the survey announcement will be "call Town Hall for a paper copy of the survey" (or something to that effect).
- The survey will be made live 2/02/21, and it will be available until February 19th (although late submissions will be accepted).
- C Iino will submit notices to the Source and HK News; subcommittee members will send Cathy their draft of said notice.
- Notice and link to the survey will be posted on the Town website on both the homepage and the CRC's page.

6) Historic Review Committee Discussion.

Members of the Historic Review Committee (hereafter HRC) in attendance: E Disbrow, D Meixell, and L Hogarty.

- The HRC is currently not listed or mentioned in the Charter; it was set up by Town ordinance.
- HRC members expressed that they are not sure that it needs to be in the Charter, but asked that the CRC, should they choose to add it, take care not to use any language that would restrict the Committee or preclude it from being given an expanded charge in the future.
 - HRC members explained that currently, their actions are driven by demolition permits pulled for structures >75 years of age and that the submission of such permits to the Building Department triggers their review; they have the authority, by ordinance, to delay demolition up to 90 days if they feel they can/should intervene to save the structure (if deemed to have historical significance). The problem is that by the time these permits come through, it is almost always too late; the structures are too far deteriorated. HRC members would like to have a broader role in the future, potentially to be able to intervene sooner, which is why they would like to be involved in any language the CRC may include in the revised charter.
- Commission members agreed that they should review all Committees that have been mandated by Town ordinance, and be sure that they are consistent as to whether or not they are in the charter, and in what capacity.
- E Disbrow commented that it is sometimes difficult to find people to join committees, specifically citing the requirement that members be registered to vote in Killingworth; she suggested the Commission consider expanding the pool to allow property owners, who may not be Killingworth electors, to serve if not as full members then perhaps at least in an advisory position.

7) Administrative Assistant Discussion

- E Disbrow discussed concerns, suggestions, and questions about the current charter; some of the items she brought up were things that staff or members of the public have come to her with.
 - §1-2. There is a need for better distinction between “boards,” “commissions,” and “committees,” and for consistency throughout the document as to what rules apply to which.
 - “Designated medium” is dictated by the State, but the word “daily” does not appear to be mandated. Removing the requirement for notices to be published in a “daily newspaper” would allow the Town more flexibility; instead of the *Hartford Courant* or *New Haven Register*, which few Killingworth residents receive, the Town would be able to consider other newspapers such as *The Source*, which is published weekly. The Commission may want to consider where the Town wants legal notices to appear, for instance on the Town website (still have to publish in a newspaper per State statute, but if there is a bare minimum, like the website, maybe that should be in the Charter).
 - Selectmen and First Selectmen terms: Disbrow expressed that there is so much to learn about the positions that there should be longer terms; four years is reasonable for such an important job. Term limits should not apply to those offices; that is what elections are for. The Town does not have a pension plan for newly elected individuals, if that is something that people are concerned about.
 - The Town should consider including a Code of Ethics or the institution of an Ethics Board. Transparency is important; if the Town had an Ethics Board, it would make sure that things are

disclosed (e.g. relationships with commissions, staff, people we do business with, etc.) and eliminate any potential or perceived conflict of interest. The Administrative Assistant receives many calls from the public, but there is currently no real avenue for complaints; there should be a clear system in place for voicing concerns.

- §5-17. Suggest they go by calendar year, not “30 days after the next municipal election.”
- §6-2(b). Strange language, not sure why or if appropriate: “Special notice to the other Selectmen may be waived...” If remains, CRC should clarify the wording and intent.
- §8. Listing of job descriptions in the charter is overly specific. For example, depending on who is the First Selectman, the role of the Administrative Assistant could be very different than what is currently described, and there should be some flexibility for him/her to staff the office as he/she sees fit (for instance, the Director of Finance could have a larger or smaller role, the Administrative Assistant’s role could range from secretarial work to higher lever executive assistant).
- §9-4. Expenditures over \$20,000. Suggest that limit be defined as a percentage of a particular department’s budget. A \$20,000 expenditure for a large Public Works project, for example, is not a big deal, but such an over-expenditure for a smaller department is.
- Annual Report. The CRC should consider what the Town wants the purpose of the annual report to be when deciding what body should be responsible for its production.

8) Stakeholder meeting discussion.

- R Rimmer reported that he has not yet received any written response from the Fire Commissioners.
- C Iino stated that she will invite Public Health Agency members to attend the 2/16 meeting.

9) Article 8 Discussion.

- Attorney Tycz has submitted his response regarding aspects of Article 8 that are required by State statute, which Chair Rimmer has distributed to Commission members.

10) Article 9 Discussion.

- K Zandi, who will be sworn in as an official member by the next Regular meeting, was assigned the Town of Haddam’s charter for reference and comparison purposes.

ASSIGNMENT: Members will continue to review their equivalent to Killingworth’s Article 9 in their respective charters for comparison and discussion at the next Regular meeting.

12) Adjournment: At 8:38pm, J Gay moved for adjournment. N Gorski seconded.

Vote: all in favor, none opposed. Motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Shauna Ham