

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
KILLINGWORTH, CT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES*

March 15, 2021

Conducted as a Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting

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

Others Present: Catherine Iino, Lauren Blaha, Jan O'Sullivan, "Elizabeth," "Michele," "User," Jason Weinstein, Dawn Mooney, Guy Vecchitto, Laurel Poletti, Laura Lefko, Eileen Blewett, Todd Blewett, Kristi LiDonni, Annie Stirna, Michele Nuhn, Jonathan Jennings (7:25pm), Tim Gannon (7:29pm), Natalie Ortoli-Drew (7:43pm), and Shauna Ham, clerk.

1) Call to order. At 7:05pm, Chairman Rimmer called the meeting to order.

2) Public Hearing. Began at 7:06pm.

Chair R Rimmer screen-shared a PowerPoint presentation providing a brief overview of the Charter Revision Commission's charge, what they have done so far, and the basic process that would have to occur for any changes to be made to the current charter. The public hearing is a formal opportunity for taxpayers to share their thoughts, ideas, and questions;* there will be at least one more public hearing before the Commission finalizes its recommendations for changes (if any). At present, the Commission has not yet made any decisions (for recommendations). Their work concludes when they submit recommendations to the Board of Selectmen, which has its own prescribed process for reviewing and either approving or rejecting them. Any amendments to the charter will be voted on by Killingworth taxpayers; the goal is for this to be included on the November ballot.

***Note: the Charter Revision Commission includes "public input" on every agenda; the public is encouraged to attend any and every meeting, not only public hearings; the Commission also welcomes comments and questions by email: KillingworthCharterRevision@gmail.com.**

Meeting information, agendas, and minutes are available on the Town website; past meeting recordings are available for viewing on YouTube.

MC Jacob gave a brief overview of the Commission's public outreach efforts, which have included articles in various news sources, use of the official Town email, Town website, posting flyers at various establishments in town advertising the public hearing, including hardcopies of the current Town Charter, and the initial survey. Jacob explained that the general goal of the survey had been to raise awareness (that the charter is being reviewed and potentially revised), incite public interest, and seek input. The survey questions were purposefully open-ended; members did not think it was appropriate for their initial survey to ask specific questions and risk narrowing the scope of thought or biasing responses. The Commission does not presume to think that what they identify as issues or areas of concern are all encompassing; leaving the questions broad would allow for a broader range of

thoughts and ideas from the public. The Commission is still seeking input and has not yet begun drafting any recommendations.

- Laura Lefko expressed that she felt the survey was confusing and too broad, should have shared specific items that the Commission has discussed.
- Laura Lefko and Laurel Poletti voiced support that the Town Clerk remain an elected position.
- Laura Lefko raised questions about the initial make-up of the Charter Revision Commission, and voiced concern about minority party representation across boards and commissions in general.
- Laura Lefko voiced that she is against having a Town Manager in Killingworth. Guy Vecchitto, Laurel Poletti, and Annie Stirna voiced contentment with Killingworth's current form of government.
- Guy Vecchitto stated that he feels term lengths for committee members should be three years.
- Guy Vecchitto recalled receiving a town-related survey in the mail at one point, and suggested that the Charter Revision Commission mail any future surveys.
- Jason Weinstein voiced concern for the Town's lack of presence on social media and suggested that the Town have an official Facebook page (for alerts, announcements, etc.). Laura Lefko and Laurel Poletti supported the idea of an official Town Facebook page.
- Tim Gannon inquired as to the level of investigation that the Commission has made into learning about the Town Manager form of government, if it has been considered, have they spoken with other towns' managers, etc. There was discussion about what is involved in the Town Manager form of government (at a basic level), the level of control/authority of a town manager, and the general advantages and disadvantages. The Town of Clinton recently changed to a town manager; the Charter Revision Commission spoke with Christine Goupil, former Clinton First Selectman and Town Council member, at their August 17, 2020 meeting about this transition; the minutes to this meeting are available on the Town website, and the recording is available for viewing on YouTube.
 - T Gannon emphasized that he felt that the Commission should be fully educated on the subject in order to make an informed decision as to whether or not they would recommend such a change in Killingworth (i.e., if they choose not to recommend changing to a town manager, it would be because they have determined that it is not suitable for Killingworth, not because they lack sufficient information).
- Annie Stirna expressed concern about the job descriptions portion of the charter, that things change dramatically in ten years and those descriptions (for non-elected employees) may not belong there at all.
- Jonathan Jennings, Guy Vechhitto, Laura Lefko, and Kristi LiDonni voiced that they felt the Selectmen term length should be four years. LiDonni favors maximum of two terms.

The Public Hearing ended at 8:35pm.

3) Approval of March 1, 2021 minutes.

The minutes were reviewed and no amendments were made.

Motion: N Gorski moved to approve the minutes of March 1, 2021. J Gay seconded.

Vote: Six in favor, none opposed, M Meixell abstained; motion passed (6-0-1).

4) Survey Update.

No update.

5) Stakeholder Meeting Discussion.

No update.

6) Review and Discussion of Current Charter.

Tabled to the next meeting.

Members discussed scheduling Saturday meetings. As the Commission finalizes its investigative work and begins focusing on recommendations, they expect longer work sessions will allow them to make greater progress. Although an extension is likely, they would like to accomplish as much as they can as soon as possible. Members agreed to schedule a Special meeting on Monday 3/29/21 beginning at 6pm.

Members discussed how best to help the public learn about the four (4) forms of local government; members agreed that a neutrally written article from an unaffiliated party, such as UConn, would be best and agreed it should be posted on the Charter Revision Commission page on the Town website. C Iino can use the Town email to direct people to the CRC page to view the document.

7) Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:08pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shauna Ham