

Charter Revision Commission  
Killingworth, Connecticut

MINUTES – PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, April 14, 2021

Conducted as a virtual meeting via GoToMeeting

**Members Present:** Rob Rimmer, Casey Jacobs, Nancy Gorski, Joan Gay, Mary Maxiell, and Kathleen Zandi.

**Others Present:** Cathy Iino, First Selectman, Arjumand Abid, Lauren Blaha, Gwen Celmer, Robert Drew, Sarah O'Brien, Natalie Ortoli-Drew, John Sampieri, Ed Sirignano, Annie Stirna, Eileen Unger-Pleines, Building Official and Bettie Perreault, acting as Clerk. (Not all those listed participated in the entire Public Hearing – some arrived late; others left before meeting ended.)

The meeting was started at 7:08 P.M. by First Selectman Iino, who turned the proceedings over to Rob Rimmer, Chair of the Charter Revision Committee. Members of the Committee were identified and guests welcomed. Rimmer provided a history of the Commission's activities, noting the present Charter has been reviewed, item by item, and Town Counsel David Tycz has been consulted frequently throughout the review process. Note was made that statutory requirements and other reforms were researched and reviewed as well. (A PowerPoint outline of the review process was provided and is included as an attachment to these Minutes.)

The meeting continued with the following points, among others, raised and discussed, and questions answered:

- Elected or Appointed officials and terms of office: how does the Town handle them?
  - Statutory requirements establish guidelines that must be observed and reflected in the Charter. Individual positions may be affected by these requirements and will need to be reflected in an up-dated Charter.
- Number of officials on the Board of Selectmen: three or increase to five?
  - Either is permitted by Statute.
  - Decision to retain as a three-member Board or increase to a five-member Board will depend upon public input during the review process.
- What constitutes a quorum of participants and how might that requirement affect the number of members of a board or commission?
  - For a three-member Board, two members constitute a quorum; for a larger board/commission, multiple members of a single political party discussing

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matters of a single board outside of a meeting, excluding those with other political affiliations could constitute an "illegal" meeting.

- Those present indicated a preference for an expanded five-member Board.
- Statutory requirements regarding minority representation need to be researched to ensure Charter requirements meet those standards.
  
- The position of First Selectman and potentially positions on other boards/commissions should not serve more than two consecutive terms in office.
  - Term limits has been raised numerous times during deliberations.
  - Statutory requirements may over-ride Charter provisions and should be researched to ensure compliance.
  
- The form of town government to include a position of Town Manager was not favored by those attending this Hearing.
  
- A referendum to vote on approval of the annual Town budget was favored by members of the audience.
  
- Efforts should be pursued to attract and involve unaffiliated voters at all levels within the Town government.
  - Unaffiliated voters are currently under-represented throughout Town government.
  
- Has the Committee made any decisions on changes to be made at this time?
  - No. The Committee is taking the task slowly, with a hard look at all items in the Charter and review of statutory requirements.
  
- What next steps will be taken in the review/re-approval process?
  - Additional meetings of the Commission based on public input, research and consultation with legal counsel.
  - Preparation of a DRAFT revised Charter.
  - A Public Hearing on the DRAFT revised Charter, followed by response to and review of input from that Hearing.
  - Referral to the Board of Selectmen for its review and approval.
  - A Public Hearing by the Board of Selectmen followed by response to and review of input from that Hearing.
  - Adoption of a revised Charter through either a Town Meeting, or, if time permits, inclusion on the ballot for election in November 2021.
  - If the vote is taken as part of a special election, at least 15% of registered voters must vote in favor to approve. (Conn. General Stat. Sec. 7-191(f).)

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- For voting purposes, only electors can vote on the Charter; property owners who are not voters in Killingworth are not eligible to vote on this matter.
- Next steps will quickly move forward within meeting scheduling and timing requirements.
- Meetings will continue to be held virtually, with all notices to be posted, while COVID pandemic restrictions remain in place.
- Ensuring that information is broadly available and accessible by voters was seen as a high-priority need. Measures to broaden the scope of public exposure could include:
  - Use on-line programs: “...this is where people are...”
    - Facebook, other social media outlets, etc.
    - Commission members as well as members of the public present at this Hearing will pursue these avenues.
    - [KillingworthCharterRevision@gmail.com](mailto:KillingworthCharterRevision@gmail.com) is available for information and additional public input to the Charter revision process.

“The only way democracy works is by participation”, Chair Rimmer stated. Watch the Town website, sign on to participate in any/all meetings of Town boards and commissions, access recordings of meetings from the Home Page of the Town website.

With thanks to those attending and note that this meeting was helpful to the Commission, and to remember that all meetings are open to the public, there were no further comments or questions from those participating.

The Public Hearing was adjourned at 8:30 P.M. after Chair Rob Rimmer confirmed there was no other input for any participants.

Respectfully submitted,

*Bettie Perreault*

Clerk

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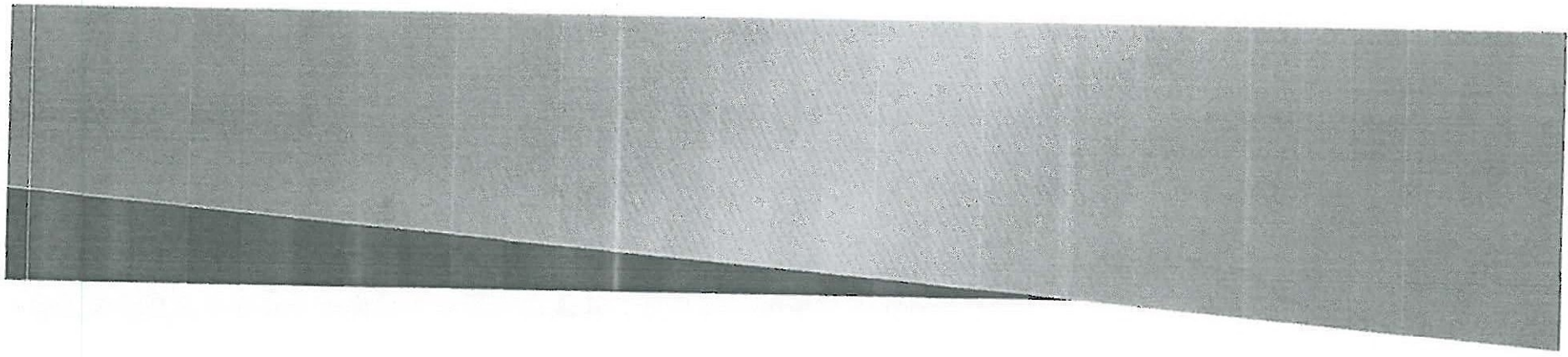
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*Michelle D'Ala*  
*Asst*

TOWN CLERK

**KILLINGWORTH CHARTER  
REVISION - PUBLIC HEARING**

**April 14, 2021**



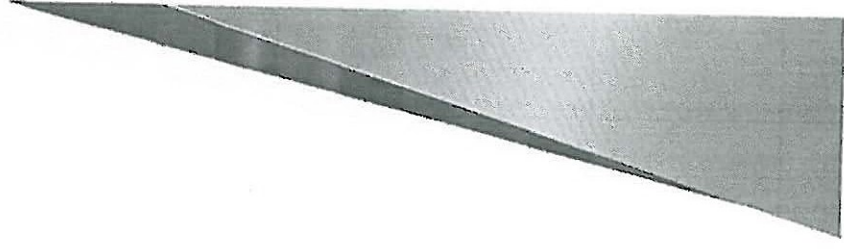
# Charter Revision Commission: Members

▶ Appointed by Killingworth BOS 13-Jan-20  
and 15-Mar-21

- Walter Adametz (R)
- Joan Gay (D), Vice Chair
- Nancy Gorski (R), Secretary
- Casey Jacob (D)
- Mary Meixell (U)
- Dawn Mooney (D) resigned in Aug 2020 and  
replaced in Feb 2021 by Kathy Zandi (D)
- Rob Rimmer (D), Chair

# Charter Revision Process

- ▶ Initial questions posed by BOS in Feb 2020
- ▶ Detailed review of KW charter
- ▶ Reviewed charters from comparable towns
- ▶ Met with and counseled by:
  - Town stakeholders
  - Town Counsel Tycz
  - University experts
  - Nearby town leaders



# Charter Revision: Town Input

- ▶ Meetings posted on town calendar and open to public (virtual since May 2020)
- ▶ Articles in Krier, Source and HK news
- ▶ Electronic survey distributed with paper copies available at town hall (151 responses)
- ▶ Made paper copies of charter available
- ▶ Public hearings (virtual)
- March 15, April 14, May/June TBA

# Changes Being Considered

- ▶ Form of Government: town meeting, town manager, mayor-town council, representative town meeting
- ▶ Board of Selectmen: expand number of members, increase term to 4 years, possibly staggered
- ▶ Elected vs. appointed positions: Town Clerk, Town Treasurer, Tax Collector
- ▶ Term Limits - State Constitutional Concerns
- ▶ Gender neutral language
- ▶ Employment descriptions and compensation structure
- ▶ Update board and committee sections
- ▶ Budget calendar, minimum bid requirements, auditor term