

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
KILLINGWORTH, CT
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES*

June 1, 2021

Conducted as a Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting

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

Others Present: Catherine Iino, Laura Lefko, Annie Stirna, and Shauna Ham, clerk.

1) Call to order. At 7:09pm, Chair Rimmer called the meeting to order.

2) Public Input.

- Laura Lefko expressed frustration that the agendas are not detailed enough, so the public is not able to comment on a topic often until after the Commission has voted/made a decision on their recommendation. She specifically cited the issue of allowing voters to serve on appointed boards; she had expressed opposition to the Commission's decision the meeting following their vote, and was frustrated that the Commission had responded with no intention of revisiting the issue as it had already been voted on. Some related discussion followed.
- Annie Stirna expressed favor for the Commission's decision to recommend the use to gender-neutral terms. She stated that she has spoken with other residents and reported that she found many not opposed to a town manager. She further reported that several were in favor of having a broader reach for appointed committees; if a person owns property in Killingworth and pays taxes, serving on a committee would increase their involvement in town and that is a good thing.
- A Stirna voiced confusion regarding the public input portion of the Charter Revision Commission meetings, stating that she has never seen a back-and-forth at other meetings like she sees here. R Rimmer expressed that many other boards put limits on their public input so as not to take up too much time and impede meeting productivity; he does not feel that this has become an issue for this Commission, and has thus far chosen not to limit public participation.

3) Approval of May 17, 2021 minutes.

Motion: N Gorski moved to approve the minutes of May 17, 2021. W Adametz seconded.

Discussion: None.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

4) Review and Discussion of Current Charter and Revisions to Current Charter.

- Since the last meeting, R Rimmer had divided the remaining revision issues and assigned to individual members (with the exception of Article VIII reformation).
- With only five of the seven Commission members in attendance, the members present agreed not to propose or vote on any revision recommendations at this meeting.
- Members discussed subcommittee formality. As long as there is no quorum (i.e., less than four individuals), a subcommittee can meet freely without formal notice, and this would not constitute an illegal meeting.
- Members agreed that posting the revision issues list to the Charter Revision Commission page on the Town website would allow the public to see specific topics of discussion that will be discussed during future meetings. The public would then be able to submit comment/input prior to Commission discussion/recommendation vote. The Commission's email address, KillingworthCharterRevision@gmail.com, will be added to the document to encourage public input by email.
- Members discussed forming additional subcommittees; some topics can be done individually, but others would benefit from teamwork/collaboration in the form of subcommittees. R Rimmer will revise the issues assignments and assign subcommittees to appropriate topics.
 - M Meixell made a recommendation regarding discussions when subcommittees/individuals have completed their work and are prepared to present to the Commission as a whole. The subcommittee or individual should plan to present as follows: a) lay out the issue, b) discuss what other towns' charters say and whether or not they are helpful, and c) what is the final recommendation?
- R Rimmer reported that he is still waiting to hear back on their requests for legal guidance on some issues.

Motion: W Adametz moved to add discussion of a second survey to the agenda. N Gorski seconded.

Vote: Motion passed unanimously (5-0-0).

5) Discussion of a second survey.

- Members discussed what the goal of the second survey would be, and when it might be released if they were to produce one. They would again have to take care that any survey did not resemble a referendum.
- C Iino suggested the Commission consider, instead of releasing a survey, having a formal public comment period on a draft of the Commission's revision recommendations. The public would have something specific to which they could respond.
 - Members responded favorably to the idea of a public comment period, and discussed what timing would be most appropriate; the Commission has more flexibility to respond to public comment and make changes to their recommendations *before* the draft is submitted to the Board of Selectmen. Members liked the idea of holding the public comment period after a

public hearing; the public hearing would be the Commission's opportunity to present the changes and discuss their rationale to the public prior to opening the comment period. They may choose to hold another public hearing after the public comment period.

- It was the mood of members present that a public comment period would serve the Commission's efforts better than another survey would. Members agreed that the timing of the comment period should be such that they are able to reconvene as a Commission afterward to see if any comments/concerns have caused them to change their minds on any issues, and allow them to alter their draft prior to submitting to the Board of Selectmen.
- W Adametz wondered if they should periodically release a list/document of the Commission's recommendations, and request public comment as they go as opposed to all at once. Discussion followed.
 - Merits expressed:
 - Make people aware of the direction the Commission is going with their recommendations.
 - Written/mailed comments, as opposed to regular meeting public input, can free up time during their meetings.
 - Concerns expressed:
 - If they invite public comment now, they are implying that they will respond to those comments now; this could be viewed as misleading, as they do not intend to consider changing any decisions that have already been made until the end of their work.
 - A new subcommittee would need to be formed to manage comments.
 - A suggestion was made that they publish articles in the monthly Krier; the articles can serve as a way for them to keep the public updated on what has been done, what votes have been made, etc. The Commission's email can be included in these articles to encourage public input, without making it appear as a formal request for comment (which would come at the end).
 - R Rimmer will add this discussion (whether to put out the final document for public comment once completed, or in segments as they go) to a future agenda so they can have input from the absent members.

5) Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 8:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Shauna Ham