

Minutes of East Lyme Charter Revision Commission Regular Meeting - 11/01/22

Date and time: 11/01/22 07:30 pm to: 11/01/22 08:00 pm

Present: Brooke Stevens, Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary, Marc Salerno, Jeffrey McNamara, Beth Hogan, Anna Johnson, Maryanna Stevens , Timothy Hagen , Larry Fitzgerald, Jay Ginsberg, Wayne Blair , Absent:, Vivek Puohit, Barry Sheckley

CC: Kevin Seery, First Selectman, Ann Cicchiello, Board of Selectmen Member, Ed O'Connell, Town Attorney, Sam Geary, Charter Revision Research Assistant

Location: East Lyme Middle School, 31 Society Road, Niantic, CT 06357

Topics

1. Call to Order

Note Mr. Salerno called the Regular Meeting of the Charter Revision Commission to order at 7:24 p.m.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Note The Commission opted to table this item until the next meeting; the Member email list will be given to the Recording Secretary so she can disseminate meeting materials to them.

2-1. October 18th, 2022, Charter Revision Commission Meeting Minutes

Note See attached meeting minutes

 [Minutes_of_the_East_Lyme_Charter_Revision_Commission_10_18_22.pdf](#)

3. Possible Discussion of Public Hearing

Note Mr. Salerno and Ms. Hogan discussed how the topic of a Town Manager, which was brought up at the Public Hearing, should be investigated in addition to the research for an Assistant to the First Selectman (item #10 Consider the possible addition of an appointive officer named the "Operations Officer" to assist the First Selectman in the performance of his or her administrative duties.)

Note Mr. Ginsberg noted the point made during the Public Hearing regarding policy being separate from management, is significant. He thinks item #10 and item #4 (Consider possible removal of Town Clerk and Tax Collector from elective offices and add said offices to administrative offices,) should be discussed together.

Note Mr. Fitzgerald noted that he too has had experience on several different town boards, and Planning has a very different focus than Zoning.

Note Mr. McNamara said many of the items they've been charged with have come up before and asked if it would be possible to have all of the past charter revision minutes scanned to them.

Note Mr. Seery introduced Sam Geary, an intern, who will be conducting research for and providing assistance to the Charter Revision Commission.

RECEIVED FOR RECORD
EAST LYME, CT
2022 NOV -1 P 1:13
Cecilia M. Marino
TOWN CLERK

Task Mr. Seery asked Mr. Geary to scan all past minutes of the various Charter Revision Commission for the current Members.

Owned by Sam Geary, Charter Revision Research Assistant due 11/03/22

Note The Commission briefly discussed with Mr. O'Connell how certain boards and commissions are in the Charter, while others are not.

Task Mr. Geary will craft a list of the Boards and Commissions not listed in the Charter.

Owned by Sam Geary, Charter Revision Research Assistant due 11/03/22

Note Mr. O'Connell discussed how items handled by ordinance such as the Police Commission, gives the Town more flexibility in making changes, while the Charter is more static.

Note Mr. Salerno asked if anyone had an item, they would like to discuss that wasn't brought up at the Public Hearing and encouraged Members to bring up anything that might occur to them as they review the Charter.

Note Mr. Seery said it might be beneficial to clean up any inconsistencies between the Charter and the Ordinances. He discussed how the Parks and Recreation Commission is mentioned in the Charter but given authority through an ordinance; the Charter says the First Selectman is the hiring and firing authority, while the Parks and Recreation Ordinance says the Parks and Recreation Commission is the hiring authority for that department.

Note Mr. Salerno asked what level of detail needs to be listed on the ballot and Mr. O'Connell replied they can be presented as "all as one" or "any part thereof", but how it's listed on the ballot is the jurisdiction of the Board of Selectmen.

4. Subcommittee Appointments

Note Mr. Salerno said if the rest of the Commission is amendable, he has grouped the 13 charges into 4 different areas, which he detailed, and the Commission discussed.

Decision The Commission agreed on the subcommittees which are as follows:

4-1. Town Budget

Note Town Budget will focus on items #1, #7, #8, & #9-

Consider possible elimination of automatic budget referendum provision in Section 7.3 of the Charter.

Consider the possible amendment of Section 6.3.4 to provide that if the Board of Finance does not act on requests for special appropriations or transfers of funds within specified time, the result is an automatic approval.

Consider the possible amendment of Section 6.3 to provide that projects funded entirely by grants from the State of Connecticut which do not require an appropriation of town funds need not be approved by the Board of Finance or a Town Meeting.

Consider the possible amendment of Section 6.3,1 to provide that the current dollar threshold of \$10,000 for special town meetings be raised.

4-2. Town Commissions

Note Town Commissions will focus on items #2, #3, #12 & #13-

Consider possible merger of the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission.

Consider possible amendment of Section 2.7 to provide four-year terms of Selectmen and two- or four-year terms of First Selectman.

Consider the possible amendment of Section 2.5.4 to provide that an appointee to a vacancy in an elective office shall serve the remainder of the term that was filled.

Consider reinstating the Conservation Commission which will be comprised of members from both the Inland Wetlands Agency and the Commission for the Conservation of Natural Resources.

4-3. Town Structure

Note Town Structure will focus on items #4, #5, & #10-

Consider possible removal of Town Clerk and Tax Collector from elective offices and add said offices to administrative offices.

Consider the possible exemption from the residency requirement set forth in Section 4.1.2 certain appointive offices, such as Director of Emergency Management, Dog Warden, etc., and the offices described in Sections 5.3- 5.7.

Consider the possible addition of an appointive officer named the "Operations Officer" to assist the First Selectman in the performance of his or her administrative duties. This group will also look into the concept of a town manager government system, and the cleanup of appointed Board(s) language.

4-4. Misc

Note Mr. Salerno noted that item #6 (Eliminate references to constables and special constables in the existing Charter), item #11 (Consider the possible amendment of Section 3.4.3 to eliminate newspaper publication when allowed by law and substitute electronic and website notice), and the cleanup of Charter language are more housekeeping items that don't require a subcommittee.

Note The Commission discussed and determined subcommittee appointments and Mr. Salerno said he will reach out to the two members not in attendance.

4-5. Appointments

Decision The Subcommittee appointments are as follows:
Town Structure- Ms. Hogan, Mr. Fitzgerald, Mr. McNamara
Town Commissions- Mr. Ginsberg, Mr. Blair, Mr. Salerno
Town Budget- Ms. Stevens, Ms. Johnson, & Mr. Hagen
TBD- Mr. Puohit & Mr. Sheckley

Note Mr. Salerno said he would like to alternate meetings between subcommittee work and full commission meetings; the next meeting will be subcommittee work and he would like to begin with public delegations, followed by approval of minutes, then they can break into subcommittees.

Note Mr. Salerno said he's open to having public delegations at the end of the full commission meetings if the Members believed that would work better.

Note The Commission discussed the schedule of meetings and Mr. Seery noted that the subcommittee work needs to be noticed and have brief minutes consisting only of action items.

 [Charter-Revision-Commission-Schedule-of-Meetings.pdf](#)

Task Mr. Seery said the Town Hall is not available for the November 15th, 2022, meeting but that he will find an alternate venue.

Owned by Kevin Seery, First Selectman due 11/14/22

Note The Recording Secretary reported that she booked the Town Hall for the rest of the meetings.

Task Mr. O'Connell asked that the settling of tax appeals be added to the Misc housekeeping portion of the agenda; the Charter says that lawsuits are settled by the Board of Selectmen, while the Assessor has generally been the party to settle tax appeals. He added that a line could be added stating that the Board of Selectmen can relegate tax appeals to the Assessor.

Owned by Marc Salerno

5. Public Delegations

5-1. Pat Larkin of 14 Oak Hill Drive

Note Mr. Larkin said he would like to see public delegations at the beginning of the meeting if they intend to break into subcommittees. He asked about the two members not in attendance and Mr. Salerno said Mr. Puohit was not able to attend this evening and that he will reach out to Mr. Sheckley. Mr. Salerno clarified that they plan to have public delegations at the beginning of the subcommittee sessions.

6. Commission Member Comments

Note There were none.

7. Adjournment

Decision MOTION (2)

Mr. Mc Namara moved to adjourn the November 1st, 2022, Regular Meeting of the Charter Revision Commission at 8:00 p.m.

Mr. Hagen seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 9-0-0.

Note Respectfully Submitted,
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary

Next Meeting

Meeting title: East lyme charter revision commission
Date and time: 11/15/22 07:00 pm to: 11/15/22 07:30 pm
Location: To be determined

Task Summary

New Tasks

Task Mr. Seery asked Mr. Geary to scan all past minutes of the various Charter Revision Commission for the current Members.

Owned by Sam Geary, Charter Revision Research Assistant due 11/08/22

Task Mr. Geary will craft a list of the Boards and Commissions not listed in the Charter.

Owned by Sam Geary, Charter Revision Research Assistant due 11/08/22

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Owned by Marc Salerno