

## Minutes of East Lyme Charter Revision Commission - 01/03/23

**Date and time:** 01/03/23 7:00 PM to: 01/03/23 7:30 PM

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

**CC:** Kevin Seery, First Selectman, Sam Geary, Charter Revision Research Assistant, Rose Ann Hardy, Board of Selectmen Member

**Location:** East Lyme Town Hall, Upper Conf. Room, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT

**Link:** <https://app.meetingking.com/meetings/390416>

### Topics

#### 1. Call to Order & Pledge

**Note** A meeting of the Charter Revision Commission will occur prior to the Commission Members breaking off into respective Subcommittee work.

**Note** Mr. Salerno called the Regular Meeting of the East Lyme Charter Revision Commission to order at 7:03 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### 2. Approval of Minutes

##### 2-1. December 6th, 2022, Charter Revision Regular Meeting Minutes

**Note** see attached minutes

[Charter-Revision-December-6-2022-Minutes.pdf](#)

**Note** Mr. Ginsberg said he'd like to clarify his remark under 4-1, Town Commissions, that there's no point in having special elections; it should say there is no point in having special elections when somebody leaves a post midway through a term.

**Decision** MOTION (1)

Mr. Ginsberg moved to approve the meeting minutes of December 6th, 2022, as amended.

Ms. Johnson seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 7-0-1.

Ms. Stevens abstained from the vote due to her absence from the December 6th, 2022, meeting.

#### 3. New Business

##### 3-1. Open Discussion on Charter Topics Not Covered by Subcommittees

**Note** Mr. Salerno said he would like to take this time to introduce Rose Ann Hardy who serves on the Board of Selectmen.

RECEIVED FOR RECORD  
EAST LYME, CT  
2023 JAN -9 A 8:29  
Cassidy M. Johnson  
TOWN CLERK

**Note** Ms. Hardy came forward and made some of the following remarks:

She's been following the work of the Commission.

She liked to discuss combining planning and zoning.

At a previous meeting it was suggested that she had requested that this be put on the agenda, which she did not.

She's opposed to this.

This has been on the agenda of two previous Charter Revision Commission's and failed both times.

Some of our neighboring communities do have a combined Planning and Zoning Commission.

We did look at those communities and it seemed to work well for that, but we felt that this was not the right move for this town.

By having the commissions separated it requires that an application be looked at and considered multiple times.

She thinks this town is too busy to have both planning and zoning together.

The second item is that she did request they consider is the Conservation Commission and the idea of whether that should be revived.

Initially the Conservation Commission was Inland Wetlands as it's now known and Natural Resources.

The Commission was overloaded, and meetings were going till 1:00 a.m., which is why it was divided into two entities.

The two Commissions were supposed to be of equal value equal importance equal say but that is not turned out to be the case.

Inland wetlands have an administrative assistant from the town hall who is with them at every meeting, while Natural Resources does not have such advice or assistance.

We have very smart members on the Natural Resources Commission, but no application requires their review and recommendations.

We don't want to overload the Commission again, so perhaps there's a way that a review process could be set up that requires an application that might involve any possible damage to natural resources, go before that Commission.

She would like them to consider this and discuss it.

The third item she'd like to discuss is removing the requirement that Department Heads once hired, must live in town.

She thinks that if we don't want to become another mystic, and we want to try to stay as a small town, people who are town employees should live in town and be a part of the community.

They should pay the same taxes and be an integral part of the community.

If you live in town, you hear a lot of things that you don't hear otherwise.

You go to the grocery store, your kids go to the school system, your part of the community.

She thinks you get a different view of your job by living in town.

We have a very attractive housing market in town.

A hire wouldn't necessarily have to move to town next week.

If they got hired, they could have a year to find a place and relocate.

**Note** The Charter Revision Commission discussed the Conservation Commission with Ms. Hardy.

**Note** Mr. Salerno observed that State Statutes require an Inland Wetlands Agency and Ms. Hardy said the same requirement doesn't exist for the Conservation Commission.

**Note** Mr. Salerno observed that State Statutes require an Inland Wetlands Agency and Ms. Hardy said the same requirement doesn't exist for the Conservation Commission.

**Note** Mr. Salerno said it would be helpful to look back on the meeting minutes of when the original Commission split into two and see if there was any kind of mission statement or bylaws drafted. He noted that understanding the intent for roles and responsibilities would be useful.

**Task**  Mr. Salerno asked that the item "Ex-Officio Comments" be added to future agendas.

*Owned by Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary*

**Note** Mr. Sheckley led a detailed discussion on the importance of determining what they're trying to achieve with any revisions they make, how these revisions will better the town, and how they might measure their progress.

**Note** Mr. Sheckley said it's a broad topic and regardless of how they do it, they should weave this into their discussions so they can determine what is it that they're trying to accomplish with the charter revision and how they will we know that they've accomplished it.

**Note** Mr. Sheckley discussed how he searched Google and looked at the town ranking, he clicked on "Niantic" and was given an indicator of what our ranking was in terms of the livability index or amenities, cost of living, crime rates, unemployment, housing, schooling and so forth.

**Note** Mr. Salerno said as they go through each item they can discuss justification, metrics such as budget savings or efficiency of government, and highlight that on each one and they can summarize it all on their final report. He said he's not sure as far as indicators go and would like to ponder that thought as they go through their subcommittee work.

**Note** Mr. Fitzgerald said knowing where they want to go is a great idea, but the challenge is that they're so far removed from operations which really drives performance; we're talking about the laws that govern that this town, and it's the people's, the processes, and strategies that really drive a lot of these things, which is not their purview.

**Note** Mr. McNamara said he agrees with Mr. Fitzgerald. He added that most of those indices are very subjective, and he cited the Economic Development Commission, which was a wonderful agency to try to improve rankings in various areas. He said this kind of focus would be more appropriate for that Commission, not Charter Revision.

---

**Note** Mr. Sheckley maybe we could just say that all these agencies have a responsibility to develop their own set of indicators; we're not in a position to tell them what they are, but they can be told that they should have them.

**Note** Mr. Ginsberg agreed it could be suggested but noted that it can't be too detailed.

**Note** Mr. Salerno said for our individual tasks, we should think about what each task is, what our recommendation is, how any proposed change will affect it; If there are metrics, we can attach to it we should consider it, at least in our rationale or decisions. He noted that rankings are subjective and come down to management and government and is not our purview.

**Note** Mr. McNamara said they can use the main point Mr. Sheckley made in their discussions, such as the discussion to combine planning and zoning, when they discuss this, they can keep in mind whether doing so will make this a better town.

#### 4. Old Business

**Note** Subcommittee Reports and Discussions

**Note** Mr. Salerno thanked Mr. Geary for the research he provided and shared that Mr. Geary created a spreadsheet of towns in CT showing their form of government, population, and whether their town clerk and tax collector are elected or appointed. He selected 47 towns, each with populations approximately within 10,000 people of ours. See attached spreadsheet.

 [Charter Revisions - CT Towns Spreadsheet.xlsx](#)

#### 4-1. Town Commissions

**Note** Since the last scheduled Subcommittee meeting was cancelled, the Town Commissions Subcommittee had no report to present at this time.

#### 4-2. Town Structure

**Note** Since the last scheduled Subcommittee meeting was cancelled, the Town Structure Subcommittee had no report to present at this time.

#### 4-3. Town Budget

**Note** Since the last scheduled Subcommittee meeting was cancelled, the Town Budget Subcommittee had no report to present at this time.

### 5. Public Delegations

**Note** There were none.

### 6. Adjournment

**Decision** MOTION (2)

Mr. McNamara moved to adjourn the January 3rd, 2023, Charter Revision Commission meeting at 7:35 p.m.

Mr. Ginsberg seconded the motion.

Motion carried, 8-0-0.

**Note** A Town Commissions Subcommittee meeting, Town Structure Subcommittee meeting, and Town Budget Subcommittee meeting immediately followed.

**Note** Respectfully Submitted,  
Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary

## Task Summary

### New Tasks

**Task**  Mr. Salerno asked that the item "Ex-Officio Comments" be added to future agendas.

*Owned by Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary*

First Selectman			
Town	Population	Clerk	Collector
Bethel	20,000	Elected	Appointed
Branford	28,000	Appointed	Appointed
Brookfield	18,000	Elected	Appointed
Colchester	15,000	Elected	Elected
Darien	22,000	Elected	Elected
Ellington	16,000	Appointed	Appointed
Guilford	22,000	Appointed	Appointed
Madison	17,000	Appointed	Appointed
Monroe	19,000	Elected	Elected
New Canaan	21,000	Elected	Appointed
New Fairfield	13,000	Elected	Elected
Newtown	27,000	Elected	Appointed
North Haven	24,000	Elected	Elected
Old Saybrook	10,000	Elected	Elected
Orange	14,000	Elected	Elected
Oxford	13,000	Elected	Elected
Plainfield	15,000	Elected	Elected
Ridgefield	25,000	Elected	Elected
Seymour	17,000	Appointed	Appointed
Simsbury	25,000	Appointed	Appointed
Southbury	20,000	Elected	Appointed
Stafford	11,000	Elected	Appointed
Stonington	18,000	Elected	Elected
Suffield	16,000	Elected	Elected
Waterford	19,000	Elected	Elected
Westport	27,000	Appointed	Appointed
Wilton	19,000	Appointed	Appointed
Winchester	10,000	Elected	Appointed

Town Manager			
Town	Population	Clerk	Collector
Avon	19,000	Appointed	Appointed
Bloomfield	22,000	Appointed	Appointed
Cheshire	28,000	Appointed	Appointed
Clinton	13,000	Appointed	Appointed
Cromwell	14,000	Elected	Elected
Farmington	27,000	Elected	Appointed
Killingly	18,000	Appointed	Appointed
North Branford	13,000	Appointed	Appointed
Plainville	17,000	Appointed	Appointed
Plymouth	12,000	Elected	Appointed
Rocky Hill	21,000	Appointed	Appointed
South Windsor	27,000	Elected	Appointed
Tolland	14,000	Appointed	Appointed
Watertown	22,000	Appointed	Appointed
Wethersfield	27,000	Appointed	Appointed

Mayor			
Town	Population	Clerk	Assessor
Berlin	20,000	Appointed	Appointed
East Haven	28,000	Elected	Appointed
Ledyard	15,000	Appointed	Appointed
Mansfield	26,000	Appointed	Appointed
New Milford	28,000	Elected	Elected
Wolcott	16,000	Elected	Elected