

Minutes of East Lyme Charter Revision Town Commissions Subcommittee - 01/03/23

Date and time: 01/03/23 0 7:35 pm to: 01/03/23 08:15 pm
Present: Brooke Stevens, Recording Secretary, will not be attending Subcommittee Sessions, Jay Ginsberg, Marc Salerno, Absent:, Wayne Blair
Location: East Lyme Town Hall, Upper Conf. Room, 108 Pennsylvania Avenue, Niantic, CT

Topics

1. Call to Order

Note Immediately following a meeting of the Charter Revision Committee, the Town Commissions Subcommittee met.

Note Election of Chair: Jay Ginsberg was elected chair

2. Subcommittee Work Discussion

Note The Town Commissions Subcommittee 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 2.5.41 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.

Note The Town Commissions Subcommittee discussed the items they're charged with.

2-1. Work Discussion:

Note Regarding Charter Revision Commission charge #2 (Consider possible merger of the Planning and Zoning Commission): The Subcommittee members had discussions with current and previous members of the Planning Commission and Zoning Commission as well as the Planning officer and Zoning officer. The uniform opinion was that for a town as large and active as East Lyme the two commissions should not be combined.

Note Action Plan: The Commissions Subcommittee recommends to the full Charter Revision Commission that the two commissions in question remain separate.

2-2. Work Discussion:

Note Regarding Charter Revision Commission charge #3 (Consider possible amendment of Section 2.7 to provide four-year terms of Selectmen and two- or four-year terms of First Selectman): there was discussion of the pros and cons of such a change. The members of the subcommittee felt we needed to get some information about the terms of other towns before determining if changes should be made in the current terms of Selectman.

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Note Action Plan: The subcommittee will seek additional information.

2-3. Work Discussion:

Note Regarding Charter Revision Commission charge #12 (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.): The subcommittee reviewed the pros and cons of this change. To improve accountability and prevent confusion as to who fills an office the subcommittee felt this change was warranted.

Note Action Plan: The subcommittee recommends Section 2.5.4 of the charter be amended to provide that an appointee to a vacancy in an elective office serve the remainder of the term that was filled.

2-4. Work Discussion:

Note Regarding Charter Revision Commission charge #13 (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.): Following some comments from Ms. Hardy on this topic, the subcommittee reviewed various options for getting more value from the Natural Resources Commission. It was decided that we needed additional information as to the goals and processes of the Natural Resources Commission and what they feel are appropriate situations that they should review.

Note Action Plan: Obtain a copy of the ordinance referring to the Natural Resources Commission.

Note Action Plan: Ask the chair of the Natural Resources Commission the above questions about goals and review.

2-5. Work Discussion:

Note The Subcommittee has been asked to consider adding term limits to elected and appointed positions on Commissions. The Subcommittee began discussion of this issue and could see numerous pros and cons. We feel further discussion is warranted before formulating a recommendation.

2-6. Work Discussion:

Note The subcommittee feels some Commissions should be included in the Charter and some should be created by ordinance. The Subcommittee feels all elected Commissions need to be in the Charter along with some of the appointed Commissions.

Note Action Plan: Review the list of all the current commissions and consider which need to be made permanent by putting them in the Charter.

Note Action Plan: Discuss with town attorney the ramifications of including Commissions in the charter as opposed to creating them by ordinance.

3. Adjournment

Note The Town Commissions Subcommittee adjourned at 8:15 p.m., with no action taken.

Note Respectfully Submitted,
Jay Ginsberg, Charter Revision Commissions Subcommittee Chair