

ROCKLAND CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

JANUARY 23, 2023 at 7:00PM

Present: Committee members Doug Cope, John Ellard, Judy Hartigan, Karen Ripley, Maureen Shorrock, Pat Foley, Rich Penney, Robyn Day, Vivian Anastasi, Douglas Lapp (Town Administrator), Jen Constable (Assistant Town Administrator), Mike Ward (UMass Boston Collins Center), Jim Tarr (UMass Boston Collins Center), Anthony Wilson (UMass Boston Collins Center), and Patricia Lloyd (UMass Boston Collins Center)

Mr. Lapp opened the meeting by having everyone introduce themselves and explain why they were interested in serving on the Committee and what they hoped to get out of the process.

Mr. Lapp then gave an overview of the most recent changes to the Town Charter approved at the June 22, 2020 Town Meeting and subsequently enacted into law by the State Legislature and the Governor.

Mr. Lapp then asked for nominations for Chair of the Charter Maintenance Committee. Ms. Foley made a motion to nominate Mr. Penney. Ms. Hartigan seconded the motion. Mr. Penney was voted Chair of the Charter Maintenance Committee 2 – 0 with Mr. Penney abstaining. Mr. Lapp then asked for nominations for the Charter Review Committee. Ms. Day made a motion to nominate Mr. Penney. Ms. Foley seconded the motion. Mr. Penney was voted Chair of the Charter Review Committee 8 – 0 with Mr. Penney abstaining. Mr. Lapp then turned the meeting over to Mr. Penney.

Mr. Ward and other UMass Boston Collins Institute staff gave an overview of their policy memo entitled “Preliminary Review of the Rockland Charter.” There was then further discussion about the purpose of the permanent Charter Maintenance Committee versus the ad hoc Charter Review Committee. There was consensus that there needs to be further explanation about the exact purpose of the Charter Maintenance Committee and whether the makeup should be expanded and/or combined with the Charter Review Committee going forward.

There was then further discussion about the Town’s current Charter. Mr. Penney said that it goes into too much detail in some areas, including topics that may be better left to Town bylaws. Mr. Lapp suggested changing the name of the Board of Selectmen to Select Board, especially since four of the five current Selectmen are women.

Mr. Lapp also explained that if there’s any intention on having any articles on the next Annual Town Meeting Warrant, to be held May 1, 2023, the deadline to finalize the language is March 31st. There was a consensus that there would not be enough time to add articles for that Town Meeting and that the Committee was looking at a 12-month timeline for the May 2024 Annual Town Meeting.

Ms. Foley indicated that she would like to strengthen the position of the Town Administrator in the Charter. Ms. Day concurred with Ms. Foley and would like to strengthen the Town Administrator position and simplify the current, overly complicated organizational structure, which she indicated can negatively affect the organization's culture.

Mr. Cope agreed with Ms. Foley and Ms. Day and also indicated that he wants to look at the elected versus appointed issue in addition to strengthening the position of the Town Administrator.

Mr. Penney said he would like to clarify the roles and responsibilities of various existing boards and committees.

Ms. Hartigan indicated she would like to tackle updating the Charter "in pieces." She would like to look at each board/committee individually. She also asked about the role of Selectmen liaisons and had questions about residency requirements for boards/committees/employees.

Mr. Ellard reminded everyone that Town Meeting has not supported changing positions from elected to appointed in the past.

Ms. Ripley felt that the current Charter is "too wordy" and is not very reader friendly.

Mr. Shorrocks said she wanted to strengthen the Town Administrator's position and encouraged the Committee be strategic and not push for accomplishing everything all at once.

Mr. Penney asked the consultant if they should hold a public forum. Mr. Ward said yes, and that he strongly advised having at least one public forum to gather public input prior to any Town Meeting vote.

Mr. Penney then called for nominations for Vice Chair. Mr. Penney made a motion to nominate Ms. Hartigan as Vice Chair. Mr. Cope seconded the motion. Ms. Hartigan was unanimously voted Vice Chair 9 – 0. Mr. Penney then called for nominations for Secretary. Mr. Penney made a motion to nominate Ms. Ripley. Mr. Ellard seconded the motion. Ms. Ripley was unanimously voted Secretary 9 – 0.

The committee then set their meeting schedule to be the fourth Tuesday night of each month at 7:00pm as follows: 2/28/23, 3/28/23, 4/25/23, 5/23/23, and 6/27/23.

The meeting adjourned at 8:50pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Douglas Lapp

Approved at the 2/28/2023 Charter Review Committee Meeting.