

Charter Commission Meeting Minutes
Aldermanic Chambers, City Hall Cafeteria
December 9, 2015
7:45PM

Present: Chair Josh Krintzman, Vice Chair Rhanna Kidwell, Bryan Barash, Jane Frantz, Howard Haywood, Anne Lerner, Brooke Lipsitt, Karen Manning, Christopher Steele

In attendance: Ouida Young

Josh called the meeting to order at 7:00. He noted that Bryan would join us at 7:20 after he was sworn in as a new member of the Human Right Commission.

Agenda Items

1. Scope of work for consultants / hired clerk

Ouida Young said that the city currently has a part time intern who may be a good candidate to take on some of the Clerk's responsibilities. The person in this position may work no more than 20 hours a week altogether for the city. Jane and Karen will contact Ouida on Tuesday to discuss next steps in the process.

Ouida also spoke about the procurement of a consultant. The Collins Center has done a great deal of work on charters and may be the best option. Several Commissioners suggested that we look into the possibility of hiring a consultant to guide the Commission through certain aspects of the review process. It was decided to delay the discussion about the specific use of a consultant to later in the meeting. Bryan joined the meeting at this point.

2. Approval of draft minutes from November 23rd meeting.

The minutes were amended and accepted.

3. Scope of public hearing on December 17th

The Commissioners offered suggestions about how to organize the public hearing. The hearing will have the following components:

Introduction: Josh

- The state law regarding this particular hearing (must be held 45 days after the election)
- An explanation of the charter
- An explanation of the charter review process
- A rough outline of the timeline for addressing the 12 Articles of the charter

Public comment:

- 5 minute limit for each speaker
- 3 minute if attendance is high

Commissioners agreed that we should provide direction to the public about what input would be most helpful at this time. The commissioners also assume that residents may comment on any aspect of the charter and charter review process at the hearing. It was also agreed that the Commission would hold public hearings throughout the charter review process.

Chris made a motion that we delegate to Bryan the task of formulating the exact wording of the public hearing notice requesting input on the goals for charter reform. Seconded by Brooke. (8-0)

4. Finances of the Commission

Commissioners discussed whether to hire a consultant and what areas of the charter review process might a consultant be most helpful. Howard expressed concern about the decision making process, specifically how and when decisions would be made on various aspects of a revision.

5. **Commission work plan**

Rhanna led the group through the exercise of creating a work plan for revising each Article. To begin, the group discussed and agreed that an Article by Article review was the best approach. The group then worked to identify the steps required to revise an Article and to define the steps in the revision process. Commissioners discussed whether to take votes as each Article is reviewed or to leave voting to the end of the process when all the Articles have been reviewed. No decision was made about this issue. Several Commissioners noted the interdependencies of Articles 2, 3, and 4 and urged that these Articles be discussed thoroughly in order to formulate a cohesive governmental structure.

The Commissioners decided on the following steps for the review of the 12 Articles:

- Goal setting
- Research: city's history, data collection, information from comparable communities, elected officials
- Public input: ongoing public hearings, outreach to various organized groups, local nonprofits, emails to the Commission, a presence at community events,
- Presentations: internal and external
- Deliberations
- Drafting
- Approval

Commissioners will review the draft plan at the December 16th meeting.

6. **Communications Strategy**

Karen Manning explained a possible plan for communicating with the larger community. At this point, it is in a rough draft form and will be presented to the Commission at the December 16th meeting for review.

The plan includes the following components:

Electronic Communication: Email chartercommssion@newtonma.gov, social media.

Outreach:

Email pertinent information to groups, meet with groups or a representative of a group, attend a meeting, attend community events.

Local Media:

Contact with the Tab and Boston Globe

Email distribution list:

City Hall, organized community groups, community centers, senior homes, preschools, political and political action groups, local non-profits, community lusters, the business community

Commissioners will receive a draft of the communications strategy and are encouraged to provide feedback before the December 16th meeting.

7. **Auto Response**

Bryan made a motion to allow Karen, Jane, and Chris to draft of an auto response emails and to set it up. Howard seconded the motion. (8-0).

Brooke made motion to adjourn the meeting. Chris seconded the motion (8-0)
Meeting adjourned at 10:35.

Next Meeting:

Wednesday, December 16

7:00, Rm 211 (formerly room 222)