

From: Carolyn Keily October 3, 2011 4:04:01 PM
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Cc:

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION MINUTES 09/27/2011

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
SEPTEMBER 27, 2011

I. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Robert Heagney called the regular meeting of the Charter Revision Commission to Order at 7:05 p.m. in North Conference Room, 2nd Floor at Eno Memorial Hall, 754 Hopmeadow Street, Simsbury, Connecticut. The following members were also present: Darren Cunningham, Dan Munroe, John O'Neil, Peter Pabich and Dave Ryan. Also present was Robert M. DeCrescenzo, Esq., Town Attorney, and other interested parties.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. PUBLIC AUDIENCE

John Loomis: Mr. Loomis opposed the proposal to combine the Planning and Zoning Commissions. Mr. Loomis further stated that the Design Review Board should be a permanent board under the Charter.

Sue Bednarczyk: Ms. Bednarczyk spoke in opposition to the proposal to combine the Planning and Zoning Commissions. She further stated that the Design Review Board had great value to the Town and should be in the Charter as a permanent commission. Later in the meeting, Ms. Bednarczyk stated that the Planning Director reports to the First Selectman, and that it is hard to get planning advice from a staff member that may have divided loyalties. She asked the Charter Revision Commission to look into the dual reporting issue.

IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Mr. Cunningham to approve the minutes of the September 13, 2011 meeting. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ryan and passed unanimously.

V. IDENTIFICATION OF NEW ACTIONABLE ITEMS

The Commission requested that the Town Attorney prepare drafts of Section 806 revisions, a proposed Charter section on the Design Review board and Charter language clarifying the reporting status of various Town department heads.

VI. INVITED GUESTS

Mike Paine, Chair, Planning Commission: Mr. Paine stated that his opinions were offered as a private citizen. He noted that the Planning Commission and the Zoning Commission have different statutory requirements. Regarding the Design Review Board, he expressed his opinion that it stay an appointed board. He also expressed his opinion that the Planning and Zoning Commissions should remain elected boards because they are more responsive to residents and potential residents.

Bruce Elliot, Zoning Commission: Mr. Elliot expressed his opinion that the Design Review Board has been a great asset to the Town and that for far too long it has gone without recognition in the Charter. He further stated that the consolidation of the Planning and Zoning Commissions was a terrible idea that he was opposed to the consolidation. He further stated that in his opinion, the Commissions should continue as elective, separate commissions and that the Design Review Board should continue to be an appointed commission. He further stated that the Charter Revision Commission should look into the role of town attorney as defined by Charter Section 806. He expressed his opinions about the Town Attorney and Town Planner. He expressed concern about access by Commission members to advice of Town Attorney. He asked that the Charter Revision Commission clarify Section 806 of the Charter regarding access to the Town Attorney by members of boards and commissions and the thirty day timeframe for response.

Allan P. Needham: Mr. Needham expressed his opinion that the Design Review Board should be included in the Charter as a permanent appointed board. He also stated that the Planning and Zoning Commissions should remain separate, elected commissions.

Sean P. Askham: Mr. Askham expressed his opinion that the Planning and Zoning Commissions should remain separate.

Emil Dahlquist. Mr. Dahlquist expressed his opinions about the Design

Review Board. He stated that 33 towns have some form of a design review board. He supports putting the Design Review Board into the Charter as a permanent Commission. He also expressed the opinion that maintaining the separation of the Planning and Zoning Commissions is very important.

John Carroll: Mr. Carroll expressed the opinion that the Design Review Board was established as an advisory board for Planning and Zoning Commissions without specific authority.

Darren Cunningham: Mr. Cunningham questioned whether the land use commissions should appoint the Design Review Board.

Bruce Elliot: Mr. Elliott expressed his opinion that putting the Design Review Board into Zoning Regulations is another alternative.

Richard Schoenhardt: Mr. Schoenhardt identified himself as a Design Review Board member and he expressed his opinion that the Board makes it more efficient to go through land use process. In addition, he believes that the Board assists property owners in the land use process.

Charles Houlihan, Jr.: Mr. Houlihan expressed his opinion that the Charter Revision Commission should discuss whether or not the two commissions should remain separate. He noted that most work of the Planning Commission other than preparing the Plan of Conservation and Development comes in the form of referrals from other agencies. He stated that his opinion on the merits of combining the two commissions has evolved over the years. Now he believes planning function could be incorporated into the Zoning Commission.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Ryan to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.