

CITY OF STAMFORD 18TH CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

Members
VALERIE COOPER
ROSANNE MCMANUS
SUSAN NABEL

Members
ROBERT ROBINS
GEORGE SESSA
DONALD B. SHERER
DUDLEY WILLIAMS.

Susan Nabel, Co-Chair
Donald B. Sherer, Co-Chair
Rosanne McManus, Clerk

MINUTES OF MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING

Wednesday, March 20, 2013
7:00 p.m. – Legislative Chambers
4th Floor, Government Center
888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, CT 06904-2152

The Charter Commission met on Wednesday March 20, 2013. Present were Co-Chairs Nabel and Sherer and Commission Members Cooper, McManus, Robins and Sessa. Excused was Commission Member Williams. Also present were Charter Committee Member Mary Savage and BOR member Eileen Heaphy.

Co-Chair Sherer called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. He explained that the Commission generally allows three minutes for each speaker.

The individuals listed below spoke. (Forms, documents and exhibits submitted by each speaker are attached):

- 1 Cynthia Reeder spoke a) in favor of reconsidering the 6 months expiration of terms of members of Boards and Commissions and creating a provision in the event no appointment is made; and b) in favor of only having 5 appointed members of the WPCA board, including qualifications for WPCA board members, and clarifying the autonomy of the WPCA board (**handout**).
- 2 Frank Vartuli spoke in favor of having a Citizen's Bill of Rights incorporated into the Charter other than as a preamble (**proposed language**).
- 3 Eileen Heaphy spoke as a member of the Board of Representatives and the chair of the Legislative and Rules Committee to explain why the Board sought a Charter Commission to clarify the Code of Ethics and recommended that the language be changed to allow a minimum of 5 members, require 7 members and 2 alternates, or leave the membership up to the Board of Representatives.

The public hearing was closed at 7:30 p.m.

Co-Chair Sherer announced that the Commission would reconvene in the Democratic Caucus Room.

The Commission reconvened at 7:36 p.m.

Co-Chair Nabel stated that Dudley Williams was excused from this meeting.

The Commission discussed its future meeting dates and the need to get its report to the Board of Representatives by April 30, 2013. Commission members decided to determine when to hold the second public hearing after determining what issues are being taken up. Co-Chair Nabel announced that the Commissions meeting dates will be:

Thursday, March 28, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. (Commissioner McManus will be absent)

Wednesday, April 3, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 10, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. (Commissioner Cooper will be absent)

Wednesday, April 17, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, April 23, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.

Co-Chair Nabel asked whether any members had comments on the minutes the March 11, 2013. Commissioner Sessa noted that the nominations were incorrect: Commissioner Robbins nominated Commissioner Sherer and he nominated Commissioner Nabel. Co-Chair Nabel stated that the minutes should reflect that Commissioner McManus had made a motion to consider the position of co-chair. Co-Chair Nabel made a motion to amend the March 11, 2013 minutes which was seconded by Co-Chair Sherer and approved by unanimous voice vote. Upon motion duly made by Commissioner McManus and seconded by Commissioner Sessa, the minutes of the March 11, 2013 meeting, as amended, were approved by unanimous voice vote.

Commissioner Sherer made a motion to consider an item not on the agenda, which was seconded by Commissioner Cooper, to discuss the direction the committee wanted to go in regarding the Charge. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

- Co-Chair Sherer explained that any member can bring up an item to be included in the Charge, and the Citizen's Bill of Rights and WPCA were also brought up by the public at the public hearing. Both of these items were attended to in great detail during the last Charter Commission, which made recommendations to the Board of Representatives. Given the short time table, the fact that the membership of the Board of Representatives has not changed and the comprehensive nature of the previous review he does not believe it would be worth it to take these items up again.
- Commissioner Sessa noted that the last Commission sent a stronger proposal to the Board of Representatives regarding the Citizen's Bill of Rights, which included an ombudsmen, but the Board chose not to take it up. He does not believe the Commission should take it up again.
- Commissioner McManus stated she would like to look at the WPCA membership issue, and will listen to the tape of the meeting during which the Board of Representatives chose not to include this in the charge. She only wants to look

at the issue of membership because the last commission got bogged down in the issue of semi-autonomous nature of the WPCA. She believes the Charter and the ordinance should match and would also like to look at the issue of qualifications of members

- Commissioner Robins added that unless there is new information or some sort of defect, the Commission should not take up items which have already been given a thorough investigation
- Commissioner McManus did not feel that the WPCA membership had been given a thorough investigation by the previous commission.
- Co-Chair Sherer agreed that they should not take up things that have already been investigated
- Co-Chair Nabel recalled that she was on the committee which addressed the WPCA. They did discuss the qualifications of members and the meaning of the WPCA's semi-autonomous status. She agrees with Commissioner Robins. The last Commission spent a long time trying to write a recommendation for a Citizen's Bill of Rights without budget implications and does not see the point in taking it up again.
- Commissioner Cooper stated that if that was the consensus of the Commission, she would agree. (She pointed out that the application for the Commission referred to the Ethics Ordinance by number, which was difficult to find, and requested that the application be clarified.)
- Commissioner Sessa stated that the previous commission had opened each of their meetings for public comment at the beginning of the meetings. He would like to see that practice continued, although it was not necessary at this meeting, since there was a public hearing preceding the meeting.
- Co-Chair Sherer stated that the WPCA membership issue could be addressed simply by changing the language to "not less than five members." He noted that the last commission had discussed qualifications and it was difficult to know where to draw the line.
- Co-Chair Nabel pointed out that the membership qualifications for other boards are not set out in the Charter
- Co-Chair Nabel stated that the agenda for the next meeting should include consideration of the membership of the Board of Ethics and consideration of the membership of the WPCA.
- Commissioner Sessa added that Cynthia Reeder had brought up the issue of what would happen if no appointment was made to a board or commission within 6 months. He stated that it was deliberate that no provision be made for this in order to make sure appointments were made. He does not want to take this up again.
- Other commission members voiced agreement

Upon motion duly made and seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

Submitted by,

Susan Nabel, Co-Chair

Donald B. Sherer, Co-Chair

This meeting is on video – [Public Hearing](#) & [Meeting](#).

[Hand Submitted request.](#)