

CHARTER COMMISSION

Robert Russell, Chairman
Michael Kaelin, Vice Chairman



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TOWN HALL
238 Danbury Road
Wilton, CT 06897

CHARTER COMMISSION January 11, 2009 Wilton Historical Society

PRESENT: Robert Russell, Michael Kaelin, Alice Ayers, Marilyn Gould,
Louise Herot, Toni Lee, Paul Burnham, Doug Levene, (Chris Weldon called to
advise that he was detained at another event).

GUESTS: Lauren Mylo (Villager)

Chairman Russell called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: Upon motion by Ms. Ayers, the minutes of the 12/9/08 meeting were
unanimously approved as presented. (1 abst. Levene) Mr. Weldon had not yet arrived.

Upon motion by Ms. Ayers, the minutes of the 12/16/08 meeting were unanimously approved as
corrected (page 2, comments made by Mr. Weldon, not Mr. Burnham)

Communications

- 1) A letter was received from State Representative John Hetherington answering questions that had
been asked of him. He advised that after an ordinance is passed, it can be challenged by 15% of
the electorate. Regarding staggered terms, he clarified that you can only nominate the number of
candidates that you can elect. There was a lengthy discussion regarding the situation of having
more candidates running for election than there are positions open on a particular board. Ms.
Herot will compose a proposed wording for the Charter.
- 2) A response was received from Asst. Town Attorney Pat Sullivan advising that for purposes of
the Minority Representation statute, it is party membership that controls whether you are in the
minority party. Pat also clarified a number of other issues, including:
 - The Charter may require a number greater than 50 for signatures on a petition.
 - The number of constables may be increased.
 - The Board of Selectmen may name the chairs of various appointed commissions or
committees, unless otherwise specified in the Charter.
 - The Board of Finance (or other elected boards) may elect a vice-chairman, if desired.

- 3) As a follow-up to the public information session held by the Commission on December 9, 2008, Nick Davatzes offered some other suggestions for improving voter participation in town elections and budget referenda, including televised debates between candidates and holding the Annual Town Meeting at a time when more parents with young children might be able to attend. These suggestions will be conveyed to the Board of Selectmen but are not appropriate for inclusion in the Charter.
- 4) A request was received from Susan Russell of Erdmann Lane that neighbors be notified of any proposed sale of town property in the relevant neighborhood so that there would be ample time for public comment to be heard. The Charter does not currently provide for this, but the consensus was that it would be a good idea.
- 5) Ms. Herot asked if we should consider 4 year terms for Registrars. By statute, they are elected in even-numbered years, so as not to be candidates during the regular town election years. No action was taken.

Budget Process

A discussion was held on Article VII, the Budget Process. The commission members were in general agreement with this Article, but agreed that there is a need for some clarification and brevity. Mr. Levene moved to retain the 15% voter turnout provision for rejection of the budget. Motion seconded and unanimously carried.

It was agreed to modify C-32C(2) to return surplus bond proceeds to the general fund, using wording previously provided by CFO Joe Dolan.

Task Groups

Three subgroups as follows were formed to draft sections of the Charter.

Group 1: Town Meeting, Board of Selectmen, First Selectman, ordinances (Articles III, IV, V, VI). Mr. Kaelin (lead), Ms. Lee and Ms. Gould.

Group 2: Finances, Budgets, Capital, Supplementals (Article VII). Mr. Burnham (lead), Mr. Levene.

Group 3: Elected and Appointed Officials (Articles VIII, IX). Ms. Herot (lead), Ms. Ayers and Mr. Weldon.

The groups will meet and work when convenient. Progress will be reviewed at the next full Commission meeting, scheduled for February 24, 2009. Other meetings may be scheduled by the Vice Chairman as necessary.

Having no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Jan Andras

Recording Secretary

(minutes taken from audio recording)