

CHARTER REVIEW COMMITTEE (CRC) MEETING

March 26, 2024 Town Hall – Ropewalk Room 6PM

Committee Members Present: David Golden, Chair; Alan Costello (Zoom), Vice Chair; Robert Zupperoli, Clerk (Zoom – joined at 6:17pm), Betty Cavacco, Tim Lawlor (Zoom), Len Levin, Laurence Pizer, Martha Vautrain, Steve Bolotin (associate¹), Michael Hanlon (associate via Zoom)

Tonight’s Committee: With the absence of Joseph Hutchinson and Robert Zupperoli, associate members Steve Bolotin and Michael Hanlon were recognized as members with full voting powers for tonight’s session.

Public Comment:

None

Guest Speaker – Tim Grandy, Chair of the Planning Board

Mr. Grandy wants to see the Charter with specific language as to how often the Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP) is updated; currently it says “periodically.” There followed a discussion about alternate/associate members. Mr. Bolotin stated that associate member is defined in Mass General Laws (MGL), but not what they do. Mr. Bolotin feels it is a tough ask to have associate members attend all the meetings, but be unable to participate in the discussion. Mr. Zupperoli repeated what he has stated in previous meetings – the role of Associate Member should be consistent in the various committees.

During the above discussion, Mr. Zupperoli joined the meeting.

Discussion – Section 3-14, The Planning Board

Mr. Bolotin had prepared some suggested changes to the Planning Board section of the Charter. First, he suggested adding an associate member appointed by the Planning Board for a one-year term. The associate member would be able to participate in all discussions and, in the absence of an elected member, vote on site plan reviews, subdivision approvals, and special permit advisory opinions only. Associates would not be able to vote on policy matters.

Mr. Bolotin’s modifications put specific focus on land use planning as a major responsibility of the Planning Board, and added that the CMP must be updated at least every 10 years. He also suggested a new section aimed to help compliance with the CMP: “Any proposal made to any Town board, committee, commission, Representative Town Meeting, or other body with the authority to make a binding decision on behalf of the Town must contain a certification, signed by the proponent, that the proposal is either consistent with the CMP or, if not, why an exception to the CMP is appropriate.”

¹ Going forward alternates will be referred to as associate members to be consistent with Massachusetts General Laws .

Finally, suggested language to the Charter was broadened to require any town board or agency undertaking significant action which may impact the physical, environmental, community or economic development of the Town to report the status of such action to the Planning Board so that it may be evaluated and addressed in the Planning Board's recommendations to Town meeting. Currently, only "public improvements" need be reported.

The CRC decided to move the Open Space Committee and Land Use Acquisition Committee to a new section on Chartered Boards and Committees discuss any new language later.

Public Comment:

Ms. Virginia Davis spoke in support of creating a new section on Chartered Boards and Committees.

VOTE:

A vote was called to approve the changes to the Planning Board section of the Charter as outlined above. The vote was 6-2-0 with Mr. Pizer and Mr. Zupperoli casting the two NO votes. Ms. Cavacco and Mr. Hanlon had left the meeting before the vote.

Discussion – Section 3-5, The Town Manager

According to MGL, the CRC is not permitted to make changes to the composition, term or selection method of the Town Manager (TM).

Chair Golden suggested that the extensive powers and duties of the Town Manager remain as is. Ms. Vautrain agreed but suggested that the committee consider the reorganization of the duties into logical categories as suggested by the recent Charter Commission.

Respectfully submitted,
Lyle Lawrence

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