



**APPROVED**  
**Minutes**  
**PUBLIC HEARING**  
**Charter Revision Commission**  
**Brookfield Town Hall Room 133**  
**Thursday, September 1, 2016**  
**7:00 PM**

**Welcome:** Chair Joni Park convened the public hearing at 7:04 PM.

**Pledge of Allegiance:** The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Introduction of Committee Members:** No formal introductions were made.

**Present Committee Members:** Joni Park (Chair); Jerry Friedrich (Vice Chair); Loretta Donovan; Dotti Dori; Mark Ferry; Todd Hand

**Absent:** Committee Member Ron Jaffe

**Also Present:** Town Attorney Tom Beecher; members of the public; Video Recording Secretary Nina Mack; Meeting Recording Secretary Emily Cole Prescott (*Minutes and motions prepared by E. Cole Prescott*).

**Visual Presentation and Explanations of Procedures:** Chair Joni Park presented a Powerpoint presentation regarding the Charter, which is available for download on the Video on Demand section of the Town's website. You can [click here](#) to access the video, agenda, minutes, and presentation of this meeting.

Chair Park explained that during this public hearing, comments are welcome. The Commission will not entertain dialogue, but will only make responses to questions, as needed.

At this time, Chair Park opened the floor for public comment, moving to the next agenda item.

**Public Comments:** The following residents addressed the Board –

- *Marge Davidson of 19 Cove Road*
  - 1.) Extending the size of the Board of Selectmen, from three to five selectmen. The reasoning of this suggestion would be to open up dialogue to more than three people.
  - 2.) She also suggested the Committee consider the hiring of a town manager, citing the short, current two-year term of the First Selectman's position, noting concerns about maintaining continuity, especially while a newly appointed First Selectman assumes his or her role.
- *Bill Davidson of 19 Cove Road*

- 1.) Mr. Davidson suggested that the Town consider changing the Charter to not have the losing candidate for the First Selectman's position with the next highest number of votes elected.
  - 2.) Mr. Davidson also recommended that the Charter Revision Commission consider removing the language to pay the [second and third] Selectmen a salary.
  - 3.) Mr. Davidson asked the Charter Revision Commission to consider having Selectmen serve four-year terms instead of the current two-year terms
  - 4.) Mr. Davidson would prefer to have a five-member Board of Selectmen rather than a Town Manager.
- *Howard Lasser of 116 Tower Road*
    - 1.) Mr. Lasser mentioned the method by which the Selectmen are currently elected, reiterating Mr. Davidson's reference to the current process.
    - 2.) Lasser said is opposed to the fact that there is currently a specified formula in the Charter dictating how the Selectmen are to be paid.
    - 3.) Mr. Lasser opposes charge # 2 from the Board of Selectmen, which is to "consider a Charter change to allow for a capital referendum to be done in conjunction with the annual budget referendum without a 45-day wait
    - 4.) Mr. Lasser asked the Charter Revision Commission to consider giving residents the power to veto a decision made by the Board of Finance. Mr. Lasser referenced section C9-4, under "Actions Requiring a Town Meeting," to add a ninth to state "to consider overruling by the Board of Finance in accordance with section C8-5B of this Charter."
    - 5.) Mr. Lasser mentioned that there are various limitations that require a town meeting when moving money within the budget. Currently, the Board of Selectmen has to obtain approval from the Board of Finance to move funds interdepartmentally, and if the funds exceed a specified dollar amount, the request must be approved at a town meeting. However, Mr. Lasser pointed out a conflict in the Charter regarding unexpended funds, which allows, according to the Attorney's opinion, regardless of how large the amount of the unexpended funds, to be moved. He indicated that with this provision, unexpended funds may be "moved around" without approval at a town meeting.
    - 6.) Regarding the Board of Ethics, Mr. Lasser explained that in 2007, he had served on a Charter Revision Commission, and one of their efforts was to strengthen the role of the Board of Ethics. He noted that the intention at that time was to allow for residents to be able to bring policy violation concerns to the Board of Ethics for review, rather than requiring residents to seek their own legal counsel when they felt as though a Town's policy had been violated. He also suggested that the language of section ten relative to this matter be revised to strengthen the power of the Board of Ethics to allow it to investigate potential criminal matters, as allowable per CT General Statutes, strengthening the Charter.
  - *Rich Saluga of 32 Great Heron Lane*
    - 1.) Mr. Saluga recommends weakening the Board of Ethics options, eliminating the ability of the Ethic' Board to both obtain legal advice other than Town Attorney and to enforce recommendations.
    - 2.) Mr. Saluga asked that the Board of Ethics be allowed to expand the types of conflict of interest they could consider including how appointments are made.

3.) Mr. Saluga asked that the Committee consider strengthening language regarding the Board of Ethics, to clarify the Town Attorney's role.

4.) Mr. Saluga asked that the Board of Ethics not be allowed to consider actions of an individual prior to them becoming an elected or appointed position.

- *Betsy McIlvaine of 127 Long Meadow Hill Road & Chair of the Library Board of Trustees* requested that the Library Board be expanded from 6 to 9 members.
- *Bob Belden of 7 Red Barn Lane & Chair of the Board of Education* urged this Commission to carefully bring forward only the most important concerns, so that the suggestions receive the time and attention deserved.
- *Howard Lasser* spoke again, and stated that there is no reason to eliminate the option of the town meeting to add back to the budget with appropriate limitations.

*Chair Park asked for additional comments of the audience. There were none.*

**Closing Remarks:** Chair Park thanked all those who attended this evening's meeting. The Commission will continue to meet the first Thursday and the third Monday of every month, and public participation and comment is welcome.

**Adjournment:** Chair Park adjourned the meeting at 7:46 PM.