

Jeff Capeci
Judit DeStefano
Paul Lundquist
Deborra Zukowski



TOWN OF NEWTOWN

Minutes

The Charter Revision Communications Ad Hoc Committee met on Thursday, July 21, 2016 in Meeting Room One of the Newtown Municipal Center. Committee Chairman Judit DeStefano called the meeting to order at 7:09 pm.

VOTER COMMENT: None.

Present: Ms. DeStefano, Mr. Capeci, Mr. Lundquist, Ms. Zukowski present via skype call.

MINUTES:

MR. CAPECI MOTIONED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF 7/13/2016. MR. LUNDQUIST SECONDED. APPROVED WITH 3 YES; MS. DESTEFANO ABSTAINED, WITH AN AMENDMENT TO CORRECT THE SPELLING OF DEBORRA ZUKOWSKI'S NAME AND NOTE IT FOR FUTURE MINUTES.

COMMUNICATIONS:

Ms. DeStefano shared an email between Mary Ann Jacob and David Grogins, indicating the ballot for the charter revision referendum must be submitted to the Secretary of State on or before Sept. 23 and must be approved by the LC on or before Sept. 8. (Attached)

NEW BUSINESS:

A review of upcoming meetings scheduled confirmed that the Aug. 11 meeting will be cancelled (as 2 members will be away) and the committee has meetings planned for July 28, Aug. 4, 18, 25, and Sept. 1 at 7 pm. Meeting rooms are reserved through Sept. 1 and the committee will schedule subsequent meetings as needed prior to September.

A review of the timeline – The ballot question wording is due, approved by the LC, by Sept. 8, and should be proposed for consideration at the next LC meeting on Aug. 3. Is the explanatory text due at the same time? Action for Ms. DeStefano: follow up with Ms. Jacob and in the meantime the committee will work under the assumption that it is, requiring the committee to complete the explanatory text for LC review by the LC's Aug. 17 meeting (planned to be completed internally by or on Aug. 4).

Ballot wording – The committee considered Ms. Zukowski's recommended wording changes (attached). Good clarity but concern in respect to the Secretary of State's potentially having issue with voting on a document that does not currently exist (ie: 'amended' is in ballot question 2 to reflect the outcome of question 1). Additional reconfiguration of wording (attached) will be considered and the committee will take up again for final consideration at next meeting (July 28). Action for Mr. Lundquist – Send draft of wording to chair.

Discussion of content of explanatory text followed.

Key components were identified and individuals took responsibility to draft text for the next commission meeting:

- (1) Basic readability improved, non-substantive changes in wording and organization; perhaps in introductory text to remaining bullet points - TBD – secondary;
- (2) BOE minority representation (including ‘points to ponder’ in balance) – Mr. Lundquist;
- (3) Elimination of town meetings including changes to cap expenditures being on Budget referendum. \$1.5 being new cap for LC to approve, 5-6 per yr. expected – Ms. DeStefano;
- (4) Real property changes; town governments’ disposition or sale of real property via sealed bid or public auction – Ms. Zukowski with Mr. Lundquist to assist secondary;
- (5) Budget changes including clarification of advisory question for budget – Mr. Capeci;
- (6) Added commissions – Mr. Capeci secondary.

Considerations: in writing we need to be mindful of length and work toward brevity and clarity; keep under 1 pg. in entirety. Will draft and bring together for consideration for next week’s meeting and finish by Aug 4 meeting.

Action for Ms.DeStefano - Invite community center commission chair to attend one of our next meetings. Suggestions for outreach and what they did, what was the cost? What was effective?

Action for Ms. DeStefano - Make sure our commission is listed on the town website.

Action for Mr. Capeci – Distribute PowerPoint presentation prepared for LC for charter revision to committee members.

Consideration of potential opportunities for community engagement (to be discussed in more detail at subsequent meetings):

- (1) Ballot explanatory text clarifying changes;
- (2) Mailer;
- (3) Series of expanded letters in the Bee, when printed make available around town;
- (4) Meetings for Q/A. (2 or 3);
- (5) Q/A video on town website. 5 or 8 minutes. Or voiceover PowerPoint made from explanatory text;
- (6) Disseminate materials to and engage with community leaders, senior center, organizations and groups;
- (7) Use of social media platforms.

Budget – What will committee potentially need to spend money on?:

- (1) Charter addendum or Explanatory text printed in Bee last few weeks before vote;
- (2) Mailer.

Work on timeline for community outreach at upcoming 2-3 meetings.

VOTER COMMENT: None.

With no further business, Mr. Lundquist motioned to adjourn at 8:38pm and Mr. Capeci seconded. All in favor.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judit DeStefano
Chairman, Charter Revision Communications Committee