

SAUGUS CHARTER COMMISSION
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES
OF
AUGUST 21, 2008

The thirty-second meeting of the Saugus Charter Commission was held on Thursday, August 21, 2008. The meeting was held in the auditorium, at the Saugus Town Hall. The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Peter Manoogian, at 7:00 P.M.

Completion of STEP 4: SELECT THE BEST POSSIBLE SOLUTION(S)

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

Eight members of the nine member committee were present at roll call: Cam Cicolini, Karen Cote, Eugene Decareau, Karla J. de Steuben, Joan Fowler, Peter Manoogian, Sr., Debra Panetta and Thomas Stewart.

Albert W. Diotte, Jr. had informed the Chairman that he would not be present, due to a previous commitment.

The Chairman announced that Mr. Curran was present for his interview, and that Mr. Curran has done over 60 Charters.

He also noted that, after approval of the Minutes, the Commission Members would be rating the Proposals, and hoped to complete the task this week.

NEW BUSINESS

- **7:15 Interview with consultant proponent Michael Curran**

Mr. Curran thanked the Commission for inviting him. He explained his involvement with the Municipal Home Rule, and Municipal Association, giving one voice to all cities and towns. He explained the Ballot Question of 1966, the 3% sales tax, giving 100% of the proceeds to the Cities and Towns, and noted that two of our neighboring communities that he has worked with are Beverly and Lynn. He stated that he sees his role as aid, mentor, and advisor, but is not the one making the decisions. He did, however, offer a piece of advice: "People generally go to the polls to vote for *someone*, more than *something*." He explained that the Commission would have to put the Proposal forward as if it were a *candidate*, setting up or working with a committee to raise money, and organize under Election Law.

Mr. Curran then asked for questions from the Charter Commission:

Ms. Panetta asked if he had looked at our current Charter, and if so, what jumped out at him.

Mr. Curran noted that the Saugus Town Charter is missing all of the Special Acts and Laws, and that there is a Home Rule Amendment that allows communities to add, amend, or remove them from the Charter. He explained that you can get rid of all State Statutes and replace them with By -laws, and create a “Disposition of Statutes” table at the end of the Charter.

Cam Cicolini noted that of the 60 proposals that Mr. Curran has worked on, 21 did not pass, and asked if it was due to a lack of “politic-ing.”

Mr. Curran again expressed the importance of having the Candidates push to get the Proposal passed. He explained that when the commissions are working on a one year plan, the election is 14 months after they finish their work, and that can work either in favor or against them, because sometimes politics change in that amount of time. He noted that the two year plan that Saugus is using only gives six months before the election, which isn’t as bad, but a lot can still happen. You can have a very quiet summer, but then when September rolls around, all of the negativity will start to come up.

Mr. Stewart noted that the final product is only good if adopted, but also, only good if implemented, and asked how you would make sure of that.

Mr. Curran expressed his opinion that a good plan, even if *not* adopted, will have an effect. Pieces will come through by other methods. Radical change cannot happen overnight, and usually a schedule is put forth to implement such change.

Mr. Stewart asked who is responsible for implementing the new Charter.

Mr. Curran’s example was the city of Lynn, who put in a procedure to have the City Solicitor involved to ultimately bring a court order against those who did not comply. However, Mr. Curran also noted that the courts don’t like to get involved in politics.

Mr. Decareau asked if hired, would Mr. Curran attend all of the remaining Charter Commission meetings.

Mr. Curran responded that he usually gets involved in the process sooner, so that he can get a feel of what everyone wants, and that he would definitely attend all of the meetings, and communication would be available through email, phone call, or mail.

Ms. Panetta asked if Mr. Curran is currently working with any other cities or towns.

Mr. Curran stated that he is retired, well rested, and ready to go to work.

Mr. Manoogian asked if Mr. Curran is the only person that the Commission would be working with.

Mr. Curran stated that there is a lot to be said for working with an individual instead of a firm. You really get to know each other.

Ms. Cicolini asked if Mr. Curran would deal with only one Commission Member.

Mr. Curran stated that he would follow the direction of the Commission, but usually communicates with any member.

As there were no more questions, the Chairman thanked Mr. Curran for coming and then returned to the Agenda.

READING OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (August 14, 2008)

Minutes were distributed to all of the Commission Members to review before the next meeting.

ACCEPTANCE OF PREVIOUS MINUTES (August 7, 2008)

Debra Panetta noted one correction to the Minutes.

Debra Panetta made a motion to accept the August 7, 2008 minutes, as amended.

The Chairman seconded the motion.

The motion passed **8-0**

PUBLIC COMMENT

None at this time.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The Chairman thanked Ms. Janice Jarosz for finding, and providing the Charter Commission with a copy of, "An Analysis of Tenure and Termination of Town Managers in Saugus, Massachusetts," by Brent Wilke. The document deals with the turnover of Managers in Saugus.

Mr. Manoogian advised the Commission Members that the Town Manager did throw out the Proposal from Petrini and Associates, because the price was included in the proposal.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Eugene Decareau reported no change at this time.

COMMITTEE REPORT

None at this time.

NEW BUSINESS (Continued)

- **Consultant Preference**

Chairman Manoogian asked the Charter Commission Members to vote their preference for consultant, voting Kopleman and Paige, Michael Curran, or Either is Acceptable. The tally is as follows:

	Kopleman & Paige	Michael Curran	Either
Eugene Decareau		X	
Thomas Stewart	X		
Cam Cicolini	X		
Karen Cote			X
Peter Manoogian			X
Debra Panetta			X
Karla J. de Steuben			X
Joan Fowler			X

Michael Curran 1
Kopleman and Paige 2
Either is Acceptable 5

Because the majority of the Charter Commission Members voted that either would be acceptable, Mr. Manoogian explained that the lowest bid will be the hired Consultant. Peter Manoogian said that he would keep the Commission Members informed.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Chairman submitted a letter from Lauren Goldberg of Kopelman and Paige for the record. Ms. Goldberg thanked the members of the Charter Commission for taking the time to meet with her regarding the position of Consultant. A copy of the letter will be attached and on file in the Town Clerk’s Office.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Chairman Manoogian explained the procedure for evaluating the Proposals, having the Clerk draw names, and each Member having the opportunity to re-state or re-explain his / her proposal in the allowed amount of time, then the remaining Commissioners rating the proposal on the Pugh tally sheet.

A five minute recess was called from 8:10 to 8:15, before getting started.

- **Rank Proposals**

1. Eugene Decareau – Had two Proposals, discarded one, and was looking at the Seven Board of Selectmen one. He stated that after listening to everyone and going over each of the Proposals, whether Selectmen or Councilors, everyone wanted “Accountability.” He noted that he is looking for a compromise, with a seven member Board and the Vice Chair also serving on the School Committee. He also stressed that it is important to do what’s best for the Town. He believes that the Town Manager should serve for five years, and within the first year, become a resident of Saugus if he / she is not already, to show commitment to the Town. The Selectmen would be the policy makers. The Town Manager would be appointed by the B.O.S., with a simple majority to hire / fire. Town Employees would not be allowed to serve on Town Meeting. He concluded by saying that he wants to keep it simple.

2. Karla J. de Steuben – Presented a chart pointing out her top three priorities are Accountability, Transparency, and Civic Engagement, noting that her model gives the public the opportunity to see who is making the decisions, and that this form of open government has been adopted in communities across the country. She stated that Saugus doesn't really have a Town Meeting form of government where everyone participates. She stressed the importance of ethics and the elimination of conflicts of interest.
3. Peter Manoogian – Presented his Adaptive Administrative Proposal as his preferred choice, with Town Meeting and a Steering Committee. Town Meeting would have necessary information 14 days prior to acting. There would be a separate Licensing Committee, and the Steering Chairman would give an Annual Address. The Charter would contain an Index and clear definitions.
4. Thomas Stewart – Presented his Mayor / Council Proposal, stating that it would be a drastic change. He would like to centralize policy decisions, and have accountability by that person, being voted in and out. The Mayor would appoint a professional Manager to see to the day to day operations. There would be a 13 member Council, ten from Precincts, three at large. A five member School Committee would serve with one of the at-large Councilors, with the Chairman only voting in case of a tie. He proposes staggered four year terms, and a nine member Finance Committee.
5. Cam Cicolini – Revised her previous Proposal, keeping Town Meeting at five members per precinct, not seven. She would keep a Town Manager with no residency requirement. The Town Manager would be present at all Saugus functions, and could only serve for five years. Town Meeting would serve for three years, and both the Board of Selectmen and School Committee would have three year staggered terms. The Town Manager, Board of Selectmen and School Committee would all participate in the Budget process.
6. Debra Panetta – Put forth her Town Manager / Town Council form of government. She proposes a Town Manager hired / fired by a simple majority of the 35 member Town Council. She would reduce the precincts from ten to seven, electing five Councilmen from each. The Council would be the policy makers, and Town Employees could not run for Council. The Charter would contain provisions for an interim Town Manager to serve no longer than ten months. The School Committee would be involved with the budget process from the onset.

7. Karen Cote – Presented her Representative Town Meeting Proposal. The Town Manager would be responsible for the day to day operations. The Board of Selectmen would set policy . A Chairperson would run separately and serve on both the Board of Selectmen and School Committee. She proposes three year staggered terms, and elections in the spring. The Finance Committee would appoint a Comptroller, and all budgets would be adopted by June 30th.
8. Joan Fowler – Handed out a new Proposal for her Town Council / Town Administrator form of government. There would be an eleven member Council, nine from precincts and two at large. The Council would provide for an annual audit. The Council President would also serve on the School Committee. The Town Administrator would establish a Capital Improvements Program and Department of Public Safety. There would be four year staggered elections for both the Town Council and School Committee.

At the end of Ms. Fowler's presentation, the Chairman advised that the Commission had achieved their goal for the evening, agreeing that each member would only present one proposal each. Next week the Committee Members will finish their presentations.

Mr. Stewart stated that he is beginning to see preferences in parts of the various proposals, and may not be able to narrow it down to his top three, as suggested in the evaluation procedure.

Ms. de Steuben wanted to go on the record as not going to vote in favor of any variation of our current Representative Town Meeting form of government, regardless of the scores. She stated that she wants to put power back into the hands of the voters, and that Town Meeting only works well in small communities, which Saugus isn't.

The Chairman asked if she wanted to talk about non-negotiables. Ms. de Steuben answered that the Charter Commission needed to have the opportunity for discussion, not fill out the Pugh Chart in silence.

After some debate over how to proceed, Mr. Stewart made a motion to have a round-table discussion about which pieces of each proposal the members liked and disliked.

Mr. Stewart moved to have the discussion at the first meeting in September.

The Chairman seconded the motion.

The motion passed **8-0**

Next Meeting Date – August 28th, 7:30 PM

As previously agreed, the next meeting will take place on August 28, 2008, at 7:30 P.M. in the Town Hall Auditorium. Members agreed to set the first meeting in September for September 11, 2008, at 7:00 P.M. in the Town Hall Auditorium.

MEMBERS ANNOUNCEMENTS / MOTIONS

None at this time.

PUBLIC FORUM

None at this time.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Stewart moved to adjourn at 10:10 P.M.

The Chairman seconded the motion.

The motion passed **8-0**

APPROVED ON _____

SUBMITTED BY _____