

Harvard Charter Commission
Meeting Minutes
September 27, 2017
Upper Town Hall – Volunteer Government Room

Members present: Paul Cohen (Chair), Rick Maiore Sharon McCarthy, George McKenna, Stephanie Opalka, Ron Ostberg, Charles Redinger, Cindy Russo, Peter Warren.

Paul Cohen called the meeting to order at 4:10. The minutes of the 9/19 meeting were approved as amended.

Before the meeting, Stephanie Opalka and Sharon McCarthy annotated the most recent draft of the Charter with comments from the UMass Edward J. Collins, Jr. Center for Public Management (Collins report). The Harvard League of Women’s Voters had requested that the Center review the preliminary Charter. Using the Opalka/McCarthy draft, the commissioners reexamined the draft article by article.

The Overview, Summary, Recommendation, and Statement of Intent will be included with the final Charter report.

Most of the changes made to the Charter during the meeting were for clarification, formatting, and reordering of paragraphs and bullet points and will be seen in the final Charter report.

Elected vs. Appointed – Section 3-1

Ron Ostberg supported Charles Redinger’s statement at the last meeting that nobody at the public hearing had supported the change from elected to appointed membership on boards. Ron expressed his concern about having the Town Administrator appoint whoever leads the Community and Economic Development group. Ron said that the person would need more time and expertise to complete large projects than is available on the Select Board and the Planning Board. He suggested an entity with an executive directive that is made up of members of the Select Board, Planning Board, other land-use boards, and citizens. He described how the entity would function and added that it would not be the role of the Charter to establish this entity.

Maintenance of Buildings and Infrastructure – Section 3-2 (a) 2. v)

The commissioners revisited having all town buildings, including schools, maintained under one authority. After discussion about the pros and cons, they agreed that the Select Board should be responsible for maintenance planning, but not execution.

Chairperson Term Limits – Section 3-8

After discussing the pros and cons of limiting chair people to two consecutive terms, Rick Maiore suggested deleting the requirement and letting members of committees make that decision themselves. On a Peter Warren/Rick motion, the commission voted 6-3 in favor of deleting the section.

Section 5-5: Facilities Manager

More discussion followed about the wisdom of having town buildings and school buildings operated separately, but the status quo remained.

The next meeting is scheduled for October 5 at 5 p.m.

Paul adjourned the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Laura Andrews, Recorder