

Town of Ridgefield Board of Selectmen Special Meeting
November 6, 2017 | 6:30 PM | Town Hall Large Conference Room
400 MAIN STREET | RIDGEFIELD, CT 06877
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

These minutes are a general summary of the meeting and are not intended to be a verbatim transcription.

In attendance: R. Marconi, B. Hebert, M. Kozlark, B. Manners, S. Zemo

Agenda

2017-18 Charter Revision Commission Candidate Interviews

The meeting was called to order by R. Marconi at 6:31 PM.

The BOS is currently seeking seven members for the Charter Revision Commission; however this may increase to nine members depending upon the pool of candidates. The CRC will hold a Public Hearing in December to receive comments on possible modifications to the Town Charter.

Ellen Burns

Ellen Burns, owner of Books on the Common, discussed the importance of the town charter, as it grants power to the residents of Ridgefield. Upon further discussion, Ellen discussed the importance of voting on town matters and expressed displeasure with the lack of community involvement in terms of election turnouts. As a Main Street business owner and active member of the community, she feels that her connection to the community will allow her to gather feedback from the population outside of the normal process. Ellen stated her analytical skills will assist the commission in modifying the language within the current town charter which sets her apart from other candidates.

Chris Sorgie

Chris stated he briefly reviewed the charter online in an effort to become more familiar with the document. Chris, a Ridgefield resident of four years, is looking for different ways to lend value to the community, while also learning new things. Chris possesses a unique perspective when analyzing data and offers creative problem solving strategies. Chris went on to discuss the basic core demographics of the town and what possible revisions would be most impactful for the population.

Karen Sulzinsky

Karen stated she has always had a strong interest in the Charter Revision Commission. Karen thoroughly enjoys analytical debate in addition to reviewing documents and policy. Karen stated that a guiding town document is highly important and deserves more attention. When asked about possible revisions, Karen stated that she would like to see the budget line items clarified. For example, the BOE is historically printed as one number and she would like to see

it printed line by line. Karen feels that framework for how a budget needs to be presented must be implemented.

Joe Shapiro

Joe stated that since his retirement a year and a half ago, he has had a strong desire to show more community involvement. Previously, he has worked on charter revisions and served on many boards. If chosen, Joe plans to do a great deal of listening to members of the community, as he feels that the decisions to be made and to what extent should be left to the public

Robert Lenz

Robert has been a member of the community for 36 years. Robert studied political science and states that he is sad to see the form of town government dwindling and poor attendance is a factor. Robert finds working on the Charter Revision Commission to be an interesting challenge. While Robert is retired, he does travel 8-9 weeks out of the year, although the most intense time for the commission would be during the winter months. When asked how he feels about working in groups of varying opinions, Robert states that his background in Human Resources will be beneficial as he has many techniques for working in a group. Robert is thoroughly looking forward to working for a meaningful outcome for the town.

Patrick Walsh, Esq.

Patrick has served on the Planning & Zoning Commission for twelve years. The Charter Revision Commission piqued his interest four years ago. When asked about his connections to the town, Patrick assured the BOS that his town relationships will in no way affect his positions or decision making while on the commission. Patrick stated his strong listening skills and respect of others' opinions allows him to work well with others.

Jonathan Seem

Jonathan is a returning member of the CRC and enjoyed his time serving on the previous commission. Jonathan briefly discussed his previous role on the commission in addition to the process. Jonathan feels that a majority of the community isn't aware of the charter; therefore, he would like to promote participation from the public and market the commission via different media sources. Although, Jonathan has no particular agenda for this charter revision, he values the feedback from the public and will look to them for recommendations. When asked what was missing from the last Charter Revision Commission, Jonathan stated that he'd like to see more diversity in the commission, which will offer a broader range of perspectives. Jonathan stated that he doesn't foresee many changes aside from wordsmithing the current language of the document.

Steve Scala

Steve is looking to be more involved in the town. At present, he doesn't have any preconceived changes that he'd like to see. R. Marconi stated the importance of utilizing social media as an avenue for bringing awareness to the charter revision commission and their initiatives. B.

Manners also recommended transitioning voting to an electronic form as a way to increase participation and to make it easier for residents. Steve feels that the town meeting is very special and wishes more people would take interest. When asked what unique attributes he can bring to the commission, Steve stated that his experience with commercial contracts will serve him well in reviewing the charter as well as his love for Ridgefield which he describes as “a special part of the world.”

Chuck Hancock

Chuck has been a Ridgefield resident for 37 years and previously served on a town committee (Schlumberger Future Committee) and worked for IBM. Chuck would like to devote his time to the Charter Revision Commission during his time here, as he will be in Ridgefield for the winter. Although Chuck has read the charter, he doesn't currently have any changes in mind; however, he is looking forward to gathering feedback from residents for revisions. Chuck feels strongly that that our form of government, specifically having a First Selectman and town meetings, add charm to the town.

Interviews concluded at 8:10 pm.

M. Kozlark moved and S. Zemo seconded the motion to adjourn the BOS special meeting at 8:33 pm. Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,
Shannon Freda