

**For Immediate Release**

**Contact: Laurie Christiansen, 203-417-2224**

*Ridgefield, CT; April 10* -- As the Charter Revision Commission (CRC) continues to work its way through more than 100 suggestions from residents, several topics have generated lengthy parsing. Some of those topics could come to a vote at the commission's next meeting, Thursday, April 13, in the Town Hall Annex. The meeting opens with public comment at 6:30 PM.

Perhaps the lengthiest change would be a reworking of the charter's existing Standards of Conduct. That reworking was initially addressed by the 2018 CRC, but did not make it through the review process. According to members of the 2018 commission, "Much of the existing text is aspirational in nature but does not clearly and effectively outline objective standards of conduct to be observed by town officials and employees, essential components of a comprehensive ethics code." The current CRC has drawn from the past commission's draft to rework the Standards, aligning them with current best practices. The CRC is sending its draft to the town's Board of Ethics for review.

Several residents have submitted suggestions regarding the Affordable Housing Committee (AHC). Because the AHC is appointed by the Board of Selectmen, the CRC has no authority to either dissolve it or to reorganize it under the Planning & Zoning Commission, as suggested by some. The CRC is now discussing whether the AHC, which has been in existence almost continuously since 1997, should be enumerated in the charter. Advocates for the change note that it will show the town's commitment to addressing the lack of affordable housing here in Ridgefield.

Should the town's charter use gender neutral terms? Making that change sounds simple, for example, revise the word 'chairman' to 'chair.' However, the term 'Board of Selectmen' has deep roots throughout New England, and especially in Connecticut state statute. Before voting to use gender neutral terms, the Commission is consulting with counsel to ensure that such a change would not be problematic with state statute.

Public hearings on all the CRC's recommendations for charter changes are tentatively scheduled for May 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>. For notification of those hearings, sign up for 'general government notifications' on [Ridgefield Alerts](#). To watch a livestream of CRC meetings, or to see recordings of past meetings, go to the 'government' tab on the town's website homepage, click on 'Board of Selectmen', and drop down to the 'Meeting Video' tab. Meeting agendas and minutes are also available at [ridgefieldct.org](http://ridgefieldct.org).

###