

Town of Ridgefield
Charter Revision Commission Special Meeting
Monday, January 8, 2018 – 7:50 p.m.
Town Hall Large Conference Room
400 Main Street, Ridgefield, Connecticut
APPROVED MEETING MINUTES

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

Members Present: E. Burns, W. Davidson, J. Egan, E. Geisinger, C. Hancock,
J. Shapiro, L. Steinman, P. Walsh
Member Absent: J. Seem

Agenda

1. Approve the Minutes from Charter Revision Commission Meeting on December 11, 2017
2. Dave Goldenberg to discuss with the CRC his proposal that the Town Charter be amended to enable the formation of an affordable housing commission
3. CRC to review and discuss Barbara Serfilippi's request that the Town Charter be amended so that a person cannot run for more than one office in a municipal election.
4. Adjournment

The meeting was called to order by CRC Vice Chair Ellen Burns at 7:50 p.m., who chaired the meeting in the absence of CRC Chairman Jonathan Seem, who was unable to attend.

1. Approval of Minutes of December 11, 2017 Special Meeting

J. Egan moved and P. Walsh seconded the motion to approve the unrevised/unapproved minutes of the December 11, 2017 Special Meeting of the CRC. Motion carried 8-0.

2. Proposal by Dave Goldenberg to form an Affordable Housing Commission

Members of the CRC briefly discussed obtaining additional information related to the proposal by Dave Goldenberg that the Charter be revised to establish a Housing Opportunity Commission as a specifically named commission under the Charter. Mr. Goldenberg was not present at the CRC meeting. Under Mr. Goldenberg's proposal, such a new commission would replace the Affordable Housing Committee that was

formed in 1997, but is not specifically named in the Charter, and from which most members resigned several years ago.

E. Burns asked Rudy Marconi, First Selectman, who was in attendance, if he had any information he could provide to the CRC meeting relating to Mr. Goldenberg's proposal. Mr. Marconi said that the town's counsel had been consulted, and there is not a substantial difference between a commission specifically named in the Charter and a commission not specifically named. When asked about terms of members of the commission, Mr. Marconi said that such terms are concurrent with the term of the members of the Board of Selectmen. Mr. Marconi noted that the Affordable Housing Committee still exists, notwithstanding the resignations, but the Board of Selectmen has not appointed new members to fill the vacancies resulting from the resignations because the Planning and Zoning Commission was working on the affordable housing issue.

3. Proposal that Charter Provide that a Person Cannot Run for More than One Position

The CRC members briefly discussed the proposal by Barbara Serfilippi, Town Clerk, that the Charter provide that that no person should be able to run for more than one town position or seat or office in a municipal election. This proposal was also made at the CRC's January 8, 2018 Public Hearing by Michael Raduazzo, who added as an additional proposal that if a person holds a municipal elective position or seat that is not up for election at the upcoming municipal election because the term does not end upon or shortly after the upcoming election, and the person wants to run in the upcoming election for another municipal board or commission or office, that person would have to resign from the position currently held in order to run for another position or seat. The CRC members briefly discussed Mr. Raduazzo's additional proposal. There was also discussion on whether and how a vacancy is filled if there is no candidate for a town office or seat on a town board or commission at a municipal election.

As part of the discussion of positions, J. Shapiro noted that for someone who advocates a prohibition on candidacy for more than one position at a municipal election, it should not be a problem if the terms of two positions that a candidate seeks do not overlap, with the only example he offered being the election in November 2017 to the remaining year of a five-year term on the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) that ends in November 2018, and the election in 2017 of a person to fill a five-year term on the ZBA that commences in November 2018. This led to a discussion as to why terms for members of the ZBA are five years and often commence a year after the municipal election in which a person is elected, with elections for ZBA Alternates being similar.

R. Marconi was asked if he had anything to contribute regarding the term of members and alternates of the ZBA. He did not. He said that his only specific contribution that evening was his proposal that the CRC consider the Charter's threshold percentages of voters whose signatures on a petition are sufficient in order to trigger a requirement for a town meeting.

L. Steinman suggested that the CRC formulate several questions to be posed to the town's counsel that would help the CRC in focusing on several of the proposals discussed, including issues of candidates running for more than one position, what happens if no one runs for an office or seat, and whether the five-year term of ZBA members and alternates can be changed in the Charter. He took on the task of formulating such questions.

4. Adjournment

**W. Davidson moved and P. Walsh seconded the motion to adjourn at 8:27 p.m.
Motion carried 8-0.**

Respectfully submitted,
Joe Shapiro, Recording Secretary