

Charter Revision Commission 2023 - Change Request Tracker - Tab on "Public Comments"

As of 3.29.23

Item #	DATE	PROPOSAL/ISSUE	Initial Discussion	Additional Discussion on Submission	Code	Decision Date	Final Decision
A - 1	2.13.23 via Public Hearing	Should the the Ridgefield Affordable Housing Committee currently reporting to the Board of Selectman report to Planning and Zoning, instead. From their webpage, "The Affordable Housing Committee works with organizations and individuals to create more affordable housing in town, and to help people find the housing they need. We report to the Board of Selectmen." (rec'd via 2.13.23 Public Hearing)	3/1/2023: Note to the Cernone's this will be discussed at the 3/16/23 meeting	3.16.23 Mr. Cascella moved, and Mr. Rettger seconded a motion to table the discussion of the recommendation that the Ridgefield Affordable Housing Committee report to the Planning and Zoning Commission instead of the Board of Selectman until a later meeting. Motion carried 8-0. (Tracker: Tab A Item 1)			
A - 2	2.13.23 via Public Hearing	3.28.23: From Mike Rettger re Town Treasurer and Tax Collector Proposals: At last week's meeting there was some discussion as to why the prior proposals on these positions did not get voter support, and some speculation that there may have been a concern about how the positions would be appointed. I went back to the 2018 and 2014 Charter proposals, both of which suggested the change from elected to appointed, and found they had different language. The 2014 proposal including specific qualification criteria for each role, while the 2018 version did not. 2018 language can be found on page 31 of that report. 2014 language can be found on pp 29-30 of that report. 2.13.23 Suggested Change: Should the Town Charter be amended to allow the Town Treasurer currently an elected position become an appointed position. This is a proposal considered in 2018 that was voted down by the electorate No: 6704; Yes 5070 (rec'd via 2.13.23 Public Hearing)					
A - 3	2.13.23 via Public Hearing	3.28.23: From Mike Rettger re Town Treasurer and Tax Collector Proposals: At last week's meeting there was some discussion as to why the prior proposals on these positions did not get voter support, and some speculation that there may have been a concern about how the positions would be appointed. I went back to the 2018 and 2014 Charter proposals, both of which suggested the change from elected to appointed, and found they had different language. The 2014 proposal including specific qualification criteria for each role, while the 2018 version did not. 2018 language can be found on page 31 of that report. 2014 language can be found on pp 29-30 of that report.) 2.13.23 Suggested Change: Should the Town Charter be amended to allow the Tax Collector currently an elected position become an appointed position. This is a proposal considered in 2018 that was voted down by the electorate No: 6861; Yes 4905 (rec'd via 2.13.23 Public Hearing)					
A - 4	2.13.23 via Public Hearing	3.20.23 From Mike R: "Attached is an update to the draft of the Ethics section, reflecting input since last meeting. We think this is advanced sufficiently that this can serve as the basis for further discussion and consideration, with any remaining edit suggestions dealt with in that discussion (vs a continuing chain on emails)." Note to Charter Commission - the 3.19.23 Excel Spreadsheet doc has been added to the Tracker folder 2.13.23 We strongly suggest that the 2023 CRC consider the proposal of the 2017-2018 CRC regarding Article XI. We believe that the Charter, and not an Ordinance, is the proper place for the town's Standards of Conduct. Re Article XI...from Ellen & Les: the existing text of Article XI did not clearly and effectively outline objective standards of conduct to be observed by Town officials and employees, essential components of an ethics code, the CRC unanimously recommended entirely new text for Article XI in its draft report. (see supporting email from CRC email 2/13 for add'l info) (rec'd via 2.13.23 Public Hearing)	3/2/2023	3/9/23: Mr. Lordi moved, and Mr. Cascella seconded a motion to table the discussion of Ms. Burns's and Mr. Steinmen's proposed revisions to Article XI, Standards of Conduct in the Charter. Motion carried 9-0.			
A - 5	3.2.23 via Public Comment at 3.2.23 meeting	Section 2-1 Incorporation 3.16.23 Change Declined: The proposed changes are declined because they do not appear necessary and appear to be technically incorrect. The powers and privileges of the town are not conferred by the State Constitution or reserved by the town. They are granted to the town in the Connecticut General Statutes, as currently described in Section 2-1 of the Charter. The State Constitution authorizes the General Assembly to delegate to the towns such authority "as from time to time it deems appropriate" (Article Tenth of the Constitution), and the General Assembly has done so in the General Statutes. 3.2.23 Suggested Change: All the inhabitants dwelling within the territorial limits of the Town of Ridgefield, as heretofore constituted, shall continue to be a body politic and corporate under the name of "The Town of Ridgefield," hereinafter called "the Town," and as such shall have perpetual succession and may hold and exercise all powers and privileges heretofore exercised by said Town and not inconsistent with the provision of this Charter, the additional powers and privileges herein conferred and all powers and privileges conferred upon (or reserved by) Towns under (the State Constitution) the general statutes of the State of Connecticut and the laws of the United States of America.	3.16.23			3.16.23	3.16.23 Motion by Mr. Cascella to decline the revision language suggested by Mr. Tartaglia to insert the phrases "or reserved by" and "the State Constitution" into <i>Section 2-1 Incorporation</i> of the Charter. Seconded by Mr. Rettger. Motion carried 8-0.

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Item #	DATE	PROPOSAL/ISSUE	Initial Discussion	Additional Discussion on Submission	Code	Decision Date	Final Decision
A - 6	3.2.23 via Public Comment at 3.2.23 meeting	<p>Section 2-3 General Grant of Powers</p> <p>3.16.23 Changed Declined: The proposed change is declined because it does not appear necessary. As described in current Section 2-3, the source of the town's powers is the Connecticut General Statutes, enacted pursuant to the authority given to the Connecticut General Assembly in the State Constitution. Those powers include all powers "incident to the management of the property, government and affairs of the Town . . ." and a reference to other applicable laws does not appear necessary.</p> <p>3.2.23 Suggested Change: In addition to all powers granted to Towns under the constitution and General Statutes (or any other applicable laws), and those which may hereafter be conferred thereby, the Town shall have all powers specifically granted by this Charter and all powers fairly implied in or incident to the powers expressly granted and all other powers incident to the management of the property, government and affairs of the Town, including the power to enter into contracts with the United States or any federal agency, the State of Connecticut or any political subdivision thereof for services and the use of facilities, the exercise of which is not expressly forbidden by the constitution and the general law of the State of Connecticut</p>	3.16.23			3.16.23	3.16.23 Motion by Mr. Rettger to decline the revision language suggested by Mr. Tartaglia to insert the phrase "or any other applicable laws" into Section 2-3 General Grant of Powers of the Charter Section 2-1 Incorporation. Seconded by Mr. Schirm. Motion carried 8-0.
A - 7	3.2.23 via email	<p>3.19.23 Please see Mike Lordi's email with examples from different Fairfield County towns and towns in the State beginning with A through L. <i>Note to Charter Commission - the 3.19.23 Excel Spreadsheet doc has been added to the Tracker folder</i></p> <p>3.16.23 The Commission would like to explore this idea further with the current Board of Selectman. Additional research is required to explore what other towns are doing (i.e. Seymour, Westport and Southbury). Brainstorming ideas by the Commission included: First Selectman = First Selectperson or First Select Person, Board of Selectmen = Board of Selectpersons or First Select Persons, Selectman = Select Person or Select Member....or keep gender specific to the role of Selectman or Selectwoman but create a Board of Selectpersons</p> <p>3.2.23 I am writing to suggest a name change for the Board of Selectmen. I'd like to see a more inclusive and gender-neutral group. Board of Selecteds? Board of Governors? Board of Commissioners? Town Council? I'm sure a group could generate many appealing options. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>	3.16.23	3.16.23 Motion by Mr. Rettger to table the suggestion by Ms. Broderick to change the name of the Board of Selectmen to be more inclusive and gender-neutral. Seconded by Mr. Schirm. Motion carried 7-1 with Mr. Cascella voting nay			
A - 8	3.4.23 via email	<p>3.16.23 Consensus of the Commission is this is not a Charter issue as voting laws are established at the State level.</p> <p>3.4.23 I'm not sure if this would fall under the charter, but it would be wonderful to update our ability to vote on town matters in a method other than in person at evening town meetings. Perhaps voting could be available throughout the day at town hall or even online when matters arise so that more residents can participate? . (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>	3.16.23			3.16.23	3.16.23 Motion by Mr. Cascella to decline the request by Ms. Nunes to explore alternate voting options for Town Meetings. Seconded by Mr. Lordi. Motion carried 8-0.
A - 9	3.4.23 via email	<p>Section 1.1 The Charter</p> <p>3.16.23 The proposed change is declined because "organic law" appears to be the correct phrase. "Organic law" means a system of laws that form the foundation of a government, and it is the phrase used in Connecticut General Statutes Section 7-188, which authorizes any municipality to adopt a charter "which shall be its organic law . . ."</p> <p>TC: "The Charter shall be the <u>organic</u> law of the Town of Ridgefield..."</p> <p>SC: Replace or define the word "<u>organic</u>." I think the residents have different understandings of what this word means and it is the underpinning of the entire document. Suggested way to replace organic is "the principles by which the Town of Ridgefield is governed." Definition of "principles": a theorem or law that has application across a wide field.</p>				3.16.23	Motion by Mr. Cascella to decline the requests of Ms. Nunes and Mr. Tartaglia to replace the word "organic" in Section 1.1 The Charter of the Charter. Seconded by Ms. Christiansen. Motion carried 8-0.
A - 10	3.3.23 via email	<p>Section 1.1 The Charter</p> <p>3.16.23 The proposed change is declined because "organic law" appears to be the correct phrase. "Organic law" means a system of laws that form the foundation of a government, and it is the phrase used in Connecticut General Statutes Section 7-188, which authorizes any municipality to adopt a charter "which shall be its organic law . . ."</p> <p>3.3.23 TC: "The Charter shall be the organic law of the Town of Ridgefield..."</p> <p>Suggested Change: "The Charter shall be the <u>organie supreme governing</u> law of the Town of Ridgefield..."</p>	3.16.23				

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A - 11	3.4.23 via email	<p>Section 1.1 The Charter</p> <p>Charter Language: The term "board" or "boards," as used in this Charter, shall include all boards, commissions, agencies, and committees except as otherwise specified. TC: "all boards, commissions, agencies and committees..."</p> <p>SC: add subcommittees, i.e."...agencies, committees and subcommittees..." SC: add "whether elected or appointed."</p> <p>Charter Language: The term "Town agency," as used in this Charter, shall mean each board, commission, committee, department and agency of the Town for which an appropriation was made in the annual budget; each Town official who is not a member of a board, commission, committee, department or agency for whom an appropriation was made in the annual budget; each separate function of the Town for which the Board of Selectmen is responsible.</p> <p>TC: "each board, commission, committee, department or agency..."</p> <p>SC: define department, it is very ambiguous. I cannot suggest a change because I do not know what it means. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					
A - 12	3.3.23 via email	<p>Section 1.1 The Charter</p> <p>3.16.23 The proposed change is declined because it does not appear necessary, and appears to be incorrect in certain details. The principle of home rule is addressed by Article Tenth of the State Constitution, which does not guarantee any particular degree of home rule, but authorizes the General Assembly to delegate such authority to towns "as from time to time it deems appropriate . . ." The General Assembly has done so (see Title 7 of the General Statutes), and that is the source of the town's rights to home rule. Recognition of that delegation of authority in the Charter is not required. The Fundamental Orders referred to in the proposal (adopted in 1639 by the colony) have not been of any legal force or effect since the adoption of the State Constitution, if not earlier.</p> <p>3.2.23 Suggested Change: After defining terms including "resident", "Elector", "Town Agency", etc, add the following last paragraph to Section 1.1</p> <p>THE TOWN RECOGNIZES AND HONORS ITS RIGHTS TO HOME RULE AS GUARANTEED BY THE FUNDAMENTAL ORDERS, THE STATE CONSTITUTION, THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTION, AND SUCH OTHER GOVERNING LAWS OR RIGHTS TO SELF-GOVERNMENT AS MAY HAVE BY LAW, STATUTE OR CUSTOM BEEN PREVIOUSLY GRANTED OR RESERVED. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>	3.16.23			3.16.23	3.16.23 Motion by Mr. Lordi to decline the request by Mr. Tartaglia to add a suggested text regarding Home Rule to Section 1.1 The Charter of the Charter. Seconded by Mr. Schirm. Motion carried 8-0.
A - 13	3.4.23 via email	<p>Section 2.1 Incorporation (TC= Town Charter: SC = Suggested Charter)</p> <p>Charter Language: All the inhabitants dwelling within the territorial limits of the Town of Ridgefield, as heretofore constituted, shall continue <u>to be a body politic and corporate</u> under the name of "The Town of Ridgefield," hereinafter called "the Town," and as such shall have perpetual succession and may hold and exercise all powers and privileges heretofore exercised by said Town and not inconsistent with the provision of this Charter, the</p> <p>TC: "...<u>to be a body politic and corporate...</u>"</p> <p>SC: Is this a generally recognized definition of a group whose members generally change over time or an accepted legal term to define who has rights? I have not encountered it previously. I do understand precisely what this Section means and why it is included, but I want the Charter to be as clear and precise as possible without excessive verbiage. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					
A - 14	3.4.23 via email	<p>Section 2.3 General grant of powers (TC= Town Charter: SC = Suggested Charter)</p> <p>3.13.23: Rebecca asked Rudy about grants in reference to this suggested change. Rudy's reply: Grants are always issued with/for a specific purpose which is normally outlined in the application. The actual use is decided prior to the application being submitted. The housing grant was requested by the Affordable Housing Committee through the Board of Selectmen and approved by the Ct. Dept. of Housing. This grant had a very specific use which was for the study of the Prospect Ridge area for additional housing to be located adjacent to the previous building project.</p> <p>Charter Language: In addition to all powers granted to Towns under the constitution and General Statutes, and those which may hereafter be conferred thereby, the Town shall have all powers specifically granted by this Charter and all powers fairly implied in or incident to the powers expressly granted and all other powers incident to the management of the property, government and affairs of the Town, including the power to enter into contracts with the United States or any federal agency, the State of Connecticut or any political subdivision thereof for services and the use of facilities, the exercise of which is not expressly forbidden by the constitution and the general law of the State of Connecticut.</p> <p>TC: "The Town shall have all power...including the power to enter into contracts..."</p> <p>SC: If this means contracts entered into or funds allocated to the Town, I think it should be made clear who can and cannot negotiate on behalf of the Town. An example is the current negotiations being carried out with the State by the Affordable Housing Committee Chairperson as to reallocation of funds the State allocated for an assessment of Prospect Ridge. According to the way I read the Charter the Town owns those funds and has power over them as they were allocated or to be reallocated. The Committee does not have power over the use of these funds except as defined by the Town. So who has power needs to be more precisely defined or there needs to be more specific oversight defined in the Charter of all funds allocated to the town from any source. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					

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A - 15	3.4.23 via email	<p>Section 3.3 The Annual Town and Budget Meeting (TC= Town Charter: SC = Suggested Charter)</p> <p>Charter Language: The Annual Town and Budget Meeting. [(13)(16)] The Board of Selectmen may, in January of each year, appoint an Annual Town and Budget Meeting Committee. The Committee <i>shall consist of five electors, appointed for a two-year term. In the first year of implementation three members are appointed for a one-year term.</i> [(17)].</p> <p>TC: <i>"shall consist of five electors, appointed for a two-year term. In the first year of implementation three members are appointed for a one-year term."</i></p> <p>SC: I assume this means upon implementation, which includes naming a chairperson, the chairperson decides who continues to have two-year terms and who is reassigned to one-year terms? It may be generally understood what "implementation" means and we do not need to add unnecessary bulk to the Charter, but you may want to consider <u>clarifying how the change to one-year terms is decided.</u> (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					
A - 16	3.4.23 via email	<p>Section 3-6 Legal notice (TC= Town Charter: SC = Suggested Charter)</p> <p>Charter Language: <u>Legal notice of all Town Meetings shall be advertised in a newspaper</u> having a general circulation in the Town at least five days prior to a Town Meeting.</p> <p>TC: <i>"Legal notice of all Town Meetings shall be advertised in a newspaper..."</i></p> <p>SC: I believe you are all aware that the definition of where all matters requiring public notification in the Charter must be changed to include multiple forms of media including some form of electronic communications. However I stress that words such as "the emphasis must be on reaching all segments of the residents and encouraging community involvement" have to be added. For example, do the preponderance of seniors still read a newspaper and might not have on-line access? I view notification of as many town residents as practicable as a crucial role for everything in this Charter requiring public notification. I do not think this effort has been made over the past few years. If you really want examples, I can provide. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					
A - 17	3.4.23 via email	<p>Section 3.7 Organization and procedure. (TC= Town Charter: SC = Suggested Charter)</p> <p>Charter Language: The First Selectman or a representative of the First Selectman shall call the meeting to order and the meeting shall choose a moderator. All business shall be conducted as provided by Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, as amended, and in accordance with "Robert's Rules of Order - of latest revision. Unless otherwise provided by this Charter, action of all Town Meetings shall be by a majority of the members of the Town Meeting present and voting at the meeting or voting in a referendum held in accordance with this Charter.</p> <p>TC: "All business shall be conducted as provided by Chapter 90 of the General Statutes, as amended, and in accordance with "Robert's Rules of Order - of latest revision. Unless otherwise provided by this Charter,"</p> <p>SC: This statement needs to be put in a general Section of the Charter, not solely specific to Town Meetings. Further upon election or appointment ALL MEMBERS (not just Chairpersons) of all boards, commissions, agencies and committees and subcommittees should receive a copy of the current Robert's Rules of Order and a copy of the booklet "How to Run a Meeting" which I believe was created by or for the Charter Revision Committee. There must be oversight to ensure that all meetings are conducted accordingly with a place for residents or members to report grievances, perhaps a town mailbox. A certain number of non-conforming actions should perhaps warrant an AUTOMATIC ethics review. There are meetings where Robert's Rules of Order are blatantly disregarded as well as some members who overtly/purposefully do not honor their oath of office, which in part includes respecting residents and acting in a manner consistent with their role. Some verbiage to eliminate bad behavior has to be included in the Charter as well as what the oversight is, and what the remedy is. Emphasis on community involvement and elector attendance at ALL public meetings must be a requirement in the Charter, so as to not allow Chairpersons to merely tolerate some public comments which is often the case. Hundreds if not thousands of residents feel this way. A Chairperson's remedy for an individual being out-of-order is to declare thus by Robert's Rules of Order, not by any other means(well unless something becomes illegal).</p> <p>SC: As part of the oversight a requirement to record all meetings must be part of the Charter. If recording equipment is not available, Zoom can be used solely for the purpose of recording and then the entire meeting can be posted and made public. We want Ridgefield to be a vibrant, cultural, historic center, with neighborhood areas, affordable housing and support for our esteemed elders, with recreational areas as deemed appropriate and at the same time maintain open space. We want to encompass the needs of many and be a community that engenders help to those of us in need. I have lived here over forty years and have met very few residents who do not say the same about how we envision Ridgefield. In my opinion, a major opportunity to accomplish this is by being open, transparent, and encouraging involvement. YES, I do feel it is the role of the Charter to state this succinctly. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					
A - 18	3.4.23 via email	<p>Section 3-13 Creation of new boards, commissions. (TC= Town Charter: SC = Suggested Charter)</p> <p>Charter Language / TC: "The creation of any permanent board, commission, department or agency not otherwise provided for in this Charter shall require approval by vote of the Town Meeting."</p> <p>SC: First, how is this enforced? And what is "permanent?" I would call the actions of the Affordable Housing Committee as establishing itself as a permanent committee. It has had the same Chairperson for approximately 25 years, is that not a qualifier for permanent? The Affordable Housing Committee was never approved by vote of a Town Meeting. It should automatically be dissolved now that its task is complete, just as the Charter Review Committee will sunset when your job is finished and another Committee charged with the same function will only be reconstituted when Charter revisions are required again as defined by the Charter itself.</p> <p>SC: The Charter must define an automatic dissolution time frame for any Committee that has not been approved by vote of a Town Meeting. The Board of Selectmen may choose to appoint a different committee with a substantially similar charge, but it must be a new committee and it too would have to be dissolved automatically after it completes whatever its charged task is. There simply is no permanent Affordable Housing Committee or any other permanent committee unless voted on. The Charter already says this, but the Charter does not define how and when such a committee shall be dissolved. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					

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A - 19	3.4.23 via email	<p>Section 3-14. Elective offices, boards and commissions (TC= Town Charter: SC = Suggested Charter)</p> <p>Charter Language / TC: "The Town may, by ordinance approved by the Town Meeting and pursuant to provisions in the General Statutes, join, determine how it shall choose representatives, or discontinue its membership in any such regional, intergovernmental organization created by state law, in such a manner as is consistent with this Charter."</p> <p>SC: How is this monitored? I would suggest it is not monitored at all. Therefore the Charter needs to define oversight. That may be as simple as requiring public notification by members of all their affiliates once a year and the adoption of a Town media plan. No one should speak in any public forum as representing any positions for Ridgefield unless there has been a defined designation to be a town representative. I believe some neighboring towns have media plans and perhaps WesCog. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					
A - 20		<p>Section 4 Elections and Elective Officers</p> <p>SC: For brevity, I will address this section in entirety.</p> <p>Re: Reappointment of individual members to all town Boards, Commissions, and Committees (BCCs)</p> <p>The reappointment or reconfirmation of individual members to various non-elected BCCs seems inconsistent or in some cases not defined at all. I suggest standardizing this process to make it equitable to all BCC members and for the benefit of the residents of Ridgefield.</p> <p>Some BCCs reappoint members at the beginning of each new term for that individual by requesting they make an in person statement to the Board of Selectmen as to why they should be reappointed (I understand that different BCCs and individuals within BCCs may have different terms so that reappointment years may vary by the persons' term).</p> <p>I feel there is inconsistency in the reappointment process. For example, my understanding is that members of some BCCs were not reappointed at all in 2023 and possibly in other years as well. One example is the Affordable Housing Committee (AHC). To be appointed to the AHC new members must be interviewed by the BOS. However none of the members whose terms expired were reappointed in 2023 by being interviewed by the BOS. I cannot find any information on reappointment or term length for the AHC.</p> <p>I realize the AHC was formed by the BOS and is not specified in The Town Charter. Regardless of how any BCCs are formed each should be defined in The Town Charter and all member reappointments should be standardized.</p> <p>I am using the AHC as an example only since according to the Charter it no longer exists. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					
A - 21	3.3.23 via email	<p>Section 4-6 Minority representation. [[5]]</p> <p>Current Charter Language: Minority representation on any elective board or commission shall be determined in accordance with provisions of the General Statutes, unless otherwise specified in this Charter.</p> <p>The maximum number of any such board or commission who may be members of the same political party shall be as specified in the following table:</p> <p>Suggested Change: Minority representation on any elective board, or commission, or any appointive committee shall be determined in accordance with provisions of the General Statutes, unless otherwise specified in this Charter (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					
A - 22	3.3.23 via email	<p>Section 4-11 Planning and Zoning Commission</p> <p>Current Charter Language: The functions and responsibilities of the Planning and Zoning Commission include the preparation and adoption of a Plan of Conservation and Development, the designation of zoning districts in accordance with that plan, and the preparation, adoption, and implementation of zoning and subdivision regulations in furtherance of the Plan of Conservation and Development as specified in Chapters 124 and 126 of the General Statutes. To the extent provided by the General Statutes, and within the limits of its appropriations, the commission shall appoint, by vote of a majority of its members, a Director of Planning and a Zoning Enforcement Officer, and engage such employees as are necessary for its work and may contract with professional consultants.</p> <p>Suggested Changes: The functions and responsibilities of the Planning and Zoning Commission include are limited to the preparation and adoption of a Plan of Conservation and Development, the designation of zoning districts in accordance with that plan, and the preparation, adoption, and implementation of zoning and subdivision regulations in furtherance of the Plan of Conservation and Development as specified in Chapters 124 and 126 of the General Statutes. To the extent provided by the General Statutes, and within the limits of its appropriations, the commission the Board of Selectmen shall appoint, by vote of a majority of its members, a Director of Planning and a Zoning Enforcement Officer, and engage such employees as are necessary for its Planning and Zoning Commission work and may contract with professional consultants. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					
A - 23	3.3.23 via email	<p>Section 5-1 Appointive boards.</p> <p>Current Charter Language: Annually, by January 31, all appointive boards shall submit a report on attendance at meetings held during the prior calendar year to the Town Clerk. Additional appointive boards may be created and their powers and duties specified by ordinance passed at a Town Meeting. Appointive boards authorized by this section may be abolished or consolidated, their powers and duties may be altered and the number or term of office of their members may be changed by ordinance.</p> <p>Suggested Changes: Annually, by January 31, all appointive boards shall submit a report on THEIR ACTIVITY, THEIR RECOMMENDATIONS AND attendance at meetings held during the prior calendar year to the Town Clerk. Additional appointive boards may be created and SHALL BE GIVEN A SPOECIFIC MANDATE AND their powers and duties specified by ordinance passed at a Town Meeting. Appointive boards authorized by this section may be abolished or consolidated, their MANDATE, powers and duties may be altered and the number or term of office of their members may be changed by ordinance. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					

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A - 24	3.3.23 via email	<p>Section 5-2 Appointments to appointive boards and commissions.</p> <p>Current Charter Language: All terms shall be established to expire as nearly as possible at regularly staggered annual or biennial intervals. A member shall continue to hold office until a successor has been appointed and has qualified. Membership on all appointive boards provided by this article shall be determined in accordance with the minority representation law as set forth in the General Statutes unless otherwise specified in this Charter.</p> <p>Suggested Changes: All terms shall be established to expire as nearly as possible at regularly staggered annual or biennial intervals. A member shall continue to hold office until a successor has been appointed and has qualified. EVERY MEMBER OF EVERY APPOINTIVE COMMITTEE SHALL HAVE A TERM OF OFFICE LIMITED TO THE TERM OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN AND SHALL BE -REAPPOINTED THEREAFTER BY THE BOARD OF SELECTMAN AND SHALL NOT OTHERWISE ACT IN ANY OFFICIAL CAPACITY UNLESS SO RE-APPOINTED. Membership on all appointive boards provided by this article shall be determined in accordance with the minority representation law as set forth in the General Statutes unless otherwise specified in this Charter.</p>					
A - 25	3.3.23 via email	<p>Section 5-4. Architectural Advisory Committee.</p> <p>The Commission accepted a Technical Change on 3/2/23 to reword 5-4 as per below with the red line. Mr. Tartaglia is further suggesting a change to the word character:</p> <p>The Architectural Advisory Committee shall provide timely opinions and advice regarding architectural designs and materials of buildings, structures and/or other construction, landscape and site plans, lighting, and signage to the Planning and Zoning Commission for the purpose of assisting the Commission in its responsibility to ensure that the proposed exterior contained in applications pending before the Planning and Zoning Commission —architectural designs and materials of buildings, structures and/or other construction, landscape and site plans, lighting, and signage— harmonize with the New England village character of Ridgefield, including the Village District, its constituent neighborhoods, and surrounding uses; protect property values; and preserve and improve the Town's appearance and beauty.</p> <p>Suggested further change: harmonize with the New England village character style of Ridgefield, including the Village District, its constituent neighborhoods, and surrounding uses; protect property values; and preserve and improve the Town's appearance and beauty. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					
A - 26	3.3.23 via email	<p>Section 5-8 Economic and Community Development Commission.</p> <p>Current Charter Language: The Economic and Community Development Commission shall consist of seven members serving one-year terms. The Commission will seek to implement orderly and planned economic development in keeping with the character of the Town. The Commission will seek to involve all agencies, commissions, boards, and departments in the Town, which are involved in, or are affected by, economic development, as well as the residents of the Town, in its work to promote economic development.</p> <p>Suggested Change: The Economic and Community Development Commission shall consist of seven members serving one-year terms. The Commission will OBTAIN, COLLECT AND SUMMARIZE AVAILABLE AND RELEVANT ECONOMIC DATA RELATED TO THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITY OF THE TOWN, COLLECT SUGGESTIONS CONCERNING ECONOTHE PROMOTION, ENCOURAGEMENT AND GROWTH OF ECONOMIC ACTIVITY, MIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE TOWN, COORDINATE ITS COLLECTION OF DATA WITH OTHER TOWN AGENCIES AND REGULARLY REPORT ITS FULLY AND FAITHFULLY REPORT ITS FINDINGS TO THE BOS AT LEAST 4 TIMES PER YEAR. The Commission will seek to implement orderly and planned economic development in keeping with the character of the Town. The Commission will seek to involve all agencies, commissions, boards, and departments in the Town, which are involved in, or are affected by, economic development, as well as the residents of the Town, in its work to promote economic development. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					
A - 27	3.3.23 via email	<p>Section 5-16 Committees.</p> <p>Current Charter Language: Appointments and terms: Except as otherwise provided by the ordinance or resolution establishing a committee, the term of office of appointees to committees shall terminate 30 days after the next regular Town election, and the Board of Selectmen shall act as the initial appointing authority, shall choose successors, and shall fill all vacancies, except that: If the committee was established by vote at a Town Meeting and the members of that committee were either elected or confirmed by the Town Meeting, the Selectmen shall call a special Town Meeting for filling any vacancy or choosing successors, and the incumbents may remain in office until their successors have been duly chosen in this manner.</p> <p>Suggested Change: Appointments and terms: Except as otherwise provided by the ordinance or resolution establishing a committee, the term of office of appointees to committees shall terminate 30 days after the next regular Town election, and the Board of Selectmen shall act as the initial appointing authority, shall choose successors, and shall fill all vacancies, except that: If the committee was established by vote at a Town Meeting and the members of that committee were either elected or confirmed by the Town Meeting, the Selectmen shall call a special Town Meeting for filling any vacancy or choosing successors, and the incumbents may remain in office until their successors have been duly chosen in this manner.</p>					
A - 28	3.3.23 via email	<p>Section 5-17 Removal for cause.</p> <p>Current Charter Language: A member of an appointive board or committee may be removed for cause by the Board of Selectmen, but no such removal for cause shall be effected unless the member</p> <p>Suggested Change: A member of an appointive board or committee may be removed FOR ANY REASON AT THE SOLE DISCRETION BY VOTE OF THE BOS for cause by the Board of Selectmen, but no such removal for cause shall be effected unless the member:</p>					
A - 29	3.6.23	<p>3.16.23 The Commission agreed this suggestion will be addressed as part of the 3.23.23 meeting.</p> <p>3.6.23 Now that the Affordable Housing committee has submitted its Affordable Housing Plan to the state, the committee should be dissolved and or report directly to PNZ. Affordable Housing and the management of our units regarding annual certification can be done within the PNZ ranks with help from former Affordable Housing Committee members. (rec'd via crc@ridgefieldct.org)</p>					

Charter Revision Commission 2023 - Change Request Tracker - Tab on "Public Comments"

As of 3.29.23

Item #	DATE	PROPOSAL/ISSUE	Initial Discussion	Additional Discussion on Submission	Code	Decision Date	Final Decision
A - 30	3.6.23	<p>Section 4-6 Minority Representation 4-15 Board of Finance.</p> <p>3.16.23 State statute allows 4-1 representation for all 5-member Boards except the Board of Selectman. State statute allows towns to increase minority representation on any Board as desired but minority representation on a Board cannot be less than the State requirement.</p> <p>3.6.23 The BOF having a 4-1 part allotment. Why not 3-2?</p>	3.16.23			3.16.23	3.16.23 Motion by Mr. Lordi to decline the request by Ms. Franceschini to change the Board of Finance minority party representation from 1 to 2 in Section 4-15 Board of Finance of the Charter. Seconded by Mr. Schirm. Motion carried 7-1 with Ms. Welton opposing.
A - 31	3.6.23	<p>Section 4-8 Election of the Board of Selectmen.</p> <p>3.16.23 General consensus of the Board is that this is not needed</p> <p>3.6.23 BOS all running for reelection at the same time.</p>	3.16.23			3.16.23	3.16.23 Mr. Rettger moved, and Ms. Christiansen seconded a motion to decline to recommend Ms. Franceschini's change to Section 4-8 of the Charter. Motion carried 7-1 with Mr. Schirm opposing.
A - 32	3.6.23	<p>Section 5-3 Commission on the Aging.</p> <p>3.16.23 This item and the recommendation from the Commission on Aging (Tracker Tab D, #1) address the same desire to change the term limit from 3 to 2 years. The requests are motioned together and both were approved.</p> <p>3.6.23 Changing term on the Commission on Aging from 3 to 2 years.</p>	3.16.23			3.16.23	3.16.23 Mr. Rettger moved, and Mr. Schirm seconded a motion to recommend revising Section 5-3 of the Charter to incorporate the changes received from the Commission on Aging. Motion carried 8-0
A - 33	3.6.23	<p>3.16.23 The consensus of the Commission is this is not a Charter issue</p> <p>3.6.23 Various town committees not following FOIA meeting guidelines and not being properly noticed.</p>	3.16.23			3.16.23	3.16.23 Motion by Mr. Cascella to decline the request by Ms. Franceschini to address various Town committees not following FOIA guidelines. This is not a Charter issue. Seconded by Ms. Christiansen. Motion carried 8-0.
A - 34	3.6.23	<p>3.16.23 The consensus of the Commission is this is not a Charter issue</p> <p>3.6.23 How would someone who's unaffiliated run for office without picking a side or being endorsed by the R or D party?</p>				3.16.23	3.16.23 Motion by Mr. Rettger to decline the request by Ms. Franceschini to answer the question on how someone who is unaffiliated runs for office. This is not a Charter issue. Seconded by Ms. Christiansen. Motion carried 8-0.
A - 35	3.3.23 via email	<p>Section 6-1 Organization.</p> <p>Current Charter Language: The First Selectman shall provide each person appointed to a board with a copy of the ordinance, or other source, which defines the duties of the office.</p> <p>Suggested Change: The First Selectman shall provide each person appointed to a board with a copy of the ordinance, or other source and a specific mandate, which defines the duties and limitations of the office.</p>					
A-36	3.16.23 via email	<p>Article I: General Provisions Sect. 19-2 (Note: Not sure what Section 19-2 is)</p> <p>Current Charter Language: Broadcast meetings - "... proceedings of such body may be broadcast or recorded for broadcast..."</p> <p>3.16.23 Suggestion: Remove the word "may" and replace it with "must." In today's digital world, every town meeting should be broadcast and/or recorded for residents to view and/or watch at a later time, in the spirit of complete transparency. (rec'd via crc@ridgfieldct.org)</p>					
A - 37	3.16.23 via email	<p>Suggestion: in reference to the Affordable Housing Committee, which currently reports to the Board of Selectman.</p> <p>There is no mention of the Affordable Housing Committee in the current Town Charter, and as a result, should be permanently disbanded.</p> <p>The formation of the committee was never subject to a town hearing, and its' committee members, including the Chairperson, were never elected by the town residents. As a result, this committee has been operating without specific defined guidelines that are available for the public.</p> <p>*For example, this committee used the Chairperson's personal email for all correspondence until a town email address was established in June 2022. All correspondence before that date has never been available to the public, as it is not subject to FOIA. (even though it should be) This lack of transparency should disqualify this committee from being considered an authentic town body.</p> <p>*Anyone who is charged with creating affordable housing in our town should have background and experience in urban and suburban development, rather than simply a passion for a particular cause.</p> <p>*The Affordable Housing Committee developed a plan, as was required by the state of CT, which was approved by the BOS by a slim 3-2 margin. Their charge is complete, and the task and responsibility of any further development in town should now be moved to the Planning and Zoning Commission.</p> <p>**Any and all further development, whether considered "affordable" or not, should be moved to the purview of Planning and Zoning Commission.</p>					

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Item #	DATE	PROPOSAL/ISSUE	Initial Discussion	Additional Discussion on Submission	Code	Decision Date	Final Decision																		
A - 38	3.16.23 via email	<p>Article IV: Elections and Elective Officers Sect. 4-6 Minority Representation</p> <p>3.16.23 The maximum number of any such board or commission who may be members of the same political party shall be as specified in the following table (see table in Charter):</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Total Membership</td> <td>Maximum One Party</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5*</td> <td>4*</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>8</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>More than 9</td> <td>2/3 of total membership</td> </tr> </table> <p>*However, in accordance with the General Statutes, the maximum number of members of a five-member Board of Selectmen who may be members of the same political party shall be three.</p> <p>Suggestion: When the Total Membership is 5, change the Maximum of One Party to 3. Remove the *4 and the *However, in accordance with the General Statutes* statement. When the Total Membership is 9, change the Maximum of One Party to 5, rather than 6.</p> <p>I suggest these changes in order to promote a more fair and balanced membership.</p>	Total Membership	Maximum One Party	3	2	4	3	5*	4*	6	4	7	5	8	5	9	6	More than 9	2/3 of total membership					
Total Membership	Maximum One Party																								
3	2																								
4	3																								
5*	4*																								
6	4																								
7	5																								
8	5																								
9	6																								
More than 9	2/3 of total membership																								
A-39	3.20.23 via email	<p>3.20.23 My concern is with the Town Meeting process. A long time Ridgefield resident, I regularly attended Town Meetings when I first moved here in the early 1990's. I did not find the meetings conducive to participatory democracy. When the topic was of interest to town residents, the auditorium was overcrowded, it was difficult to understand all that was being said, and the paper voting process was cumbersome and lengthy. Because the timing for the meeting is always in the evening and the venue is of limited capacity, it is difficult, if not impossible, for all of our town's residents to attend.</p> <p>Perhaps in the ensuing years the process has been streamlined and become more effective. I know longer try to attend. Given the constrictions imposed by the COVID pandemic and the advancement of technology, it seems to me that a more efficient and effective process is certainly possible and should be considered. crc@ridgefieldct.org</p> <p>3.20.23 Lets bring back the "Drop Down" - Years ago, the race for Selectman was far more exciting and uncertain than it is now due to the "drop down" rule. The Selectmen candidates ran against each AND, indirectly, against the other opponent, the First Selectman candidates. The loser to the first selectman race may not have garnered enough votes to become Ridgefields' First Selectman, but they may have enough votes to beat one of the other candidates. For example, the 1st Selectman candidate received 400 votes. The rest of the slate looks as follows:</p> <p>(D)1st winner, 400 votes R. Runner up, 380 votes D Ms Jones, 300 votes R Mr Smith, 310 vote D Ms Brown, 350 votes R Mr White, 320 votes D Ms Black,345 votes</p> <p>In a regular election, the winners would be : D 1st Selectman D Brown D Black R White & R Smith.</p> <p>If the dropdown was used, it would change the outcome to: (D)1st Selectman (R) Runner Up (D)Brown (D)Black & (R)White.</p> <p>This changes the complexion of the ballot and would force the under-ticket to work harder, as they have greater competition now. Instead of four candidates running for a sure slot, there IS no sure slot when the four candidates must run including the top of the ticket. The minority representation rules still exist, which adds another layer of uncertainty to the slate.</p> <p><u>More competition means more diversity of candidates, the potential for a greater range of appeal to voters and hopefully, a greater turnout of the public.</u></p>																							
A - 41	3.27.23	<p>3.27.23 Suggested Change: The Charter should be amended to require any person elected or appointed to a Commission or Board that requires specialized knowledge or that makes decisions that could be appealed to the Superior Court take mandatory state-approved education classes once elected (and before being seated), including continuing education annually for their entire term.</p>																							

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Item #	DATE	PROPOSAL/ISSUE	Initial Discussion	Additional Discussion on Submission	Code	Decision Date	Final Decision
A - 42	3.27.23	3.27.23 Suggested Change: The Charter should be amended to prohibit elected or appointed officials from spreading misinformation, including on social media. "Misinformation" should be defined as "any information the official knows or should know is incorrect based on public information and includes misinformation by omission of important facts." The purpose is to provide a clear ethical standard about online behavior.					
A - 43	3.27.23	3.27.23 Suggested Change: The Charter should be amended to require any group or "spokesman" for any group, when appearing at a public meeting of the Town of Ridgefield to disclose the name and address of its membership. This is the same requirement as we have for individuals who speak at public meetings. Without this requirement, an agency and those who appear before the agency lack the information necessary to determine whether there is an unethical or illegal conflict of interest between the organization and members of that board or committee.					
A - 44	3.27.23	3.27.23 Suggested Change: The Charter should be amended so that Boards and Commissions are required to cooperate with each other and prohibit legal action between them unless approved by the Board of Selectmen or, if the Board of Selectmen is a party, the Board of Finance. The brewing kerfuffle between the PZC and Selectmen over Inclusionary Zoning is a warning sign.					
A - 45	3.27.23	3.27.23 Suggested Change: The Charter should be amended so that Boards and Commissions are prohibited from acting in any way they know or should know is in violation of applicable law, even as part of a lawful strategy.					
A - 46	3.27.23	3.27.23 Suggested Change: The Charter should be amended so that Boards and Commissions are prohibited from acting in any way they know or should know is in violation of applicable law, even as part of a lawful strategy.					
A - 47	3.27.23	3.27.23 Suggested Change: The Charter should be amended so that the Board of Ethics is only required to accept ethics complaints that are supported by a sworn affidavit by the complainant, including a statement of the specific ethical standard that was allegedly violated and the basis of the complainants' knowledge. The Board can promulgate a form affidavit for this purpose.					
A - 48	3.28.23	3.28.23 Suggested Change: I want to propose that park and recreation or maintenance or some other Town Department that is most appropriate maintain the bathrooms and facilities associated with the town baseball fields. I think it's appropriate to charge a fee to Ridgefield Baseball Association but the town should maintain and clean the facilities. I've been a baseball parent for many years and travel to other town baseball fields. They are generally well maintained and clean. The Ridgefield facilities are run down, dirty, often not work and generally look like no one cares. Given the amount of property taxes that we pay, I feel that having baseball field facilities (bathrooms, snack shack, dugouts) that are working, clean and presentable is a pretty basic request.					

NEW (in blue print)	
	ON HOLD
	PROPOSAL WITHDRAWN
	PROPOSAL DECLINED
	PROPOSAL APPROVED