

**MINUTES
TOWN OF GROTON
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
AUGUST 27, 2007
TOWN HALL ANNEX – COMMUNITY ROOM 2**

1. Members Present: Shirley Dunbar-Rose, Stan Dziurzynski, Robert Frink, Nancy Moffat, Richard Moravsik, Frank “Mick” O’Beirne and John Wirzbicki.
Members Absent: Ray Munn and Ed Stebbins
Also Present: Office Assistant Elga Concepcion

2. The meeting was called to order at 7 p.m.

3. A motion was made by Moffat, seconded by Moravsik, to approve the meeting minutes of **August 13, 2007**. The motion passed with six in favor, with one abstention (Wirzbicki).

4. **COMMUNICATIONS**

- a. The Chairman reported that per the Town Attorney, the Charter Revision Commission cannot give the Town Council the authority to override or to veto zoning regulations or project approvals of the Planning Department.
He received a letter recommending the study of a strong Mayor-Council government. This resident also suggested that voters be given the right to petition for a budget referendum.

The Chairman passed around an advertisement copy submitted by Moravsik to be placed on the Town’s website and possibly Channel 2.

Members discussed the Groton Home Rule Act of May 4, 1964.

- b. Secretary Dunbar-Rose received verbal communications supporting the Representative Town Meeting (RTM). She received a request for clarification from a resident regarding the term “citizen” who may speak under “Citizen Comments”. Several members discussed the definition of local residency and citizenship.
- c. Members: Moffat received communications from citizens regarding a tax freeze for the elderly and disabled. Responding to Moffat’s comments, the Chairman confirmed that this topic should not be included in the Charter. He informed members of the creation of the Citizens Committee on Property Tax Relief which reviews these types of issues.

5. **CITIZEN COMMENTS:** None.

6. **OLD BUSINESS**

Wirzbicki volunteered to work on the “Finance” portion of the Town Charter.

Frink initiated a detailed discussion of the RTM of the Town of Avon and is interested in their integration of a board of finance in lieu of an RTM.

The RTM’s role in the budget process and its composition was addressed by several members. Members who have served on prior RTMs shared experiences which were relevant to the discussion at hand and their opinions on a budget referendum.

The Chairman stated that he is pleased with the way in which the RTM and Town Council work in theory. He reminded members that there are times when these bodies are likely to get “carried away” and in these circumstances people have a right to provide input.

Chairman O’Beirne will invite RTM Moderator Natalie Billing to attend the next meeting on September 10 before voting on keeping the RTM.

(A short recess was taken at 8:05 p.m.)

The Chairman reiterated that he would like the RTM Moderator to discuss the effect of the absence of an RTM and any changes she would like to have implemented.

The Chairman stated that he does not believe that the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) prevents members from emailing their work to one another as long as there is not subsequent discussion.

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. **Definitions:**

Dziurzynski passed out copies of a rough draft of definitions which he created. Members provided suggestions/edits to his work on this section. The Chairman suggested that Dziurzynski add “City” to his list of definitions. A few of the members expressed their opinions on whether or not definitions should be written in legal language or “legalese”. Frink suggested that members provide terms which may be included in the definitions portion of the Charter. Moffat would prefer that “Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.)” be utilized instead of “Connecticut law” in the definition of “Elector”. Wirzbicki stated that the definition of a word, such as “Elector”, should not be included in its own definition. The Chairman stated that “Town Official” may be too broad a term to include as a definition. There was detailed discussion regarding the use of the term “He” in the Charter.

b. **Preamble/Mission Statement:**

Moffat reviewed her statement which she had written. She will email this draft to Office Assistant Elga Concepcion so it may be distributed to all members via email.

c. **Town Manager:**

Moravsik reported that he had made an effort to study other town charters. He is at a “crossroads” due to differing town government structures, for example, when a town has a board of finance which hires its town manager.

8. ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. was made by Moffat, seconded by Wirzbicki, and so voted unanimously.

Shirley Dunbar-Rose

Secretary

Approved: September 10, 2007.