

Charter Revision Commission – Email(s) Received from 5/12/22 – 5/16/22

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Charter Revision Comments re Meeting of 5/11

CRC Members,

I want to thank you for all the hard work and applaud your willingness to consider all sides despite the amount of resistance by a small group. Please don't forget that there are another 60,980 residents in this town - many, many of whom are starved for change.

And don't confuse this with me wanting to "get my way". So far, you have not taken pretty much any of my suggestions (of which there have been many!). And yet, I respect the CRC's thoughtful debate and hope that you can hold to your convictions, and that the First Selectwoman can convince the voters that this change can and will be positive.

Just a few brief thoughts on the current topics under consideration:

RTM - As many have observed, the RTM is NOT a well functioning body. People who say nothing is broken, simply are not paying attention. Each time this seems to come up, we are lucky enough to have evidence in the form of just the last RTM meeting. This time it's the meeting of 5/10. Watch it. It's disturbing on a number of fronts. And if you need more, watch the meeting of 4/25.

A smaller body (of 30 or below) will be more accountable and hopefully will, with one-on-one discussion, find a way to talk, compromise get things done, and get along in the process.

Minority Representation - This is a good idea. Most people have never really paid attention to the fact that there is no MR on the RTM. It's a common practice in almost all of our other boards and commissions. Indeed, when the First Selectwoman convened the CRC, she made sure there was minority representation. In fact, it is interesting that the CRC board currently sits at 3 Republicans, 3 Democrats and 1 Unaffiliated - a completely balanced board with representation from both parties and unaffiliated voters. An interesting point that always gets lost in the discussion is the fact that most of our voters in this town are unaffiliated. And yet, when was the last time that an unaffiliated person was elected to the RTM? I would imagine those constituents would be interested and excited to know that this change could make it easier for unaffiliated candidates to get voted into office and represent the largest block of voters in our town.

Minority representation works at both the state and local levels and should be adopted for the RTM by district to ensure all are represented.

Budget Process Revision - This one is just baffling. From the public's perspective, the current process is clunky, laborious, repetitive and difficult to follow. You've offered a means to streamline the current process with an opportunity to change that in the future if the process doesn't bear fruit. Yet, there is still not only resistance, but outrage, that you would even consider altering the status quo. (btw, I watched the last meeting (4/25) and it was clear that this topic was already decided by the CRC, so to say this has been sprung on the group during last night's meeting, by anyone, is wrong. There was an actual vote taken 5-1 in favor of a budget process change. In addition, language effecting this change was requested from Attorney Mednick by the Chair based on the vote.) Is trying something new so difficult that we can never take steps to improve? I do appreciate the current deep dive that the BOF undertakes in these budget hearings. I also appreciate that current office holders know how the process works. So does the public. I have watched pretty much every town meeting over the past 10 years and I see no reason why one round of budget meetings cannot be accomplished if good will and intention is followed.

Under the new approved approach, the BOS, BOF, and RTM will collaboratively get the benefit of in-depth analysis and perhaps more of the public will even avail themselves of the budget hearings.

Closing thoughts:

"The measure of intelligence is the ability to change" - Albert Einstein

"To improve is to change; to be perfect is to change often" - Winston Churchill

"Change is the law of life, and those who look only to the past and present are certain to miss the future" - John F. Kennedy

Thank you for working hard to achieve the best result for our town.

Jan Carpenter