

**CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
MINUTES FOR SPECIAL MEETING
FEBRUARY 15, 2008**

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The Charter Revision Commission conducted an organizational meeting on Friday, February 15, 2008, at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Members Present: John A. Florek, Eric W. Booth, Benjamin S. Proto, John E. Fahan, Richard Fredette, Beth McMellon, Jon A. August, James Orlowe and Karen Rodia.

Others Present: Richard J. Buturla (Town Attorney).

I. CALL TO ORDER

- Chairman Florek called the organizational meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Distributed to Commission Members:

1. *Copy of current Stratford Charter effective December 12, 2005.*
2. *Section 7-190 C.G.S.*
3. *Section 7-191 C.G.S.*
4. *Town Council Resolution Authorizing Charter Revision Commission (01/28/2008).*
5. *Suggestions for Charter changes from Town Council (02/11/2008).*

2. APPOINTMENT OF SECRETARY

- Chairman Florek appointed Gail J. Nobili as Secretary to the Commission.

3. SELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

- UPON MOTION BY MR. FAHAN AND SECONDED BY MR. BOOTH, MR. FREDETTE WAS UNANIMOUSLY NOMINATED AS VICE CHAIR.

4. ADOPTION OF RULES OF ORDER

- Chairman Florek suggested that the Commission adopt Robert's Rules of Order with one variation. Freedom of Information statutes require that notice of a special meeting be posted with the Town Clerk 24 hours in advance, with delivery of the notice to all members of the Commission. Chairman Florek suggested that the members waive formal delivery of the notice to their homes by the Police Dept and instead agree to accept delivery by e-mail.

- MR. PROTO MOVED TO ADOPT ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER AND TO ACCEPT DELIVERY OF NOTICES OF SPECIAL MEETINGS AS WELL AS ALL AGENDAS AND MINUTES VIA E-MAIL. MR. FREDETTE SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- Chairman Florek also brought up the adoption of guidelines for public hearings. Two public hearings are required by statute (one prior to beginning any substantive work, and one at the end after drafting proposed revisions), but the Commission can hold as many public hearings as it feels is necessary. Chairman Florek was concerned that all comments at the public hearings relate only to changes to the Charter and that

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the public hearings not be used as a means to criticize the Mayor, the Council or Town employees.

- MR. FREDETTE MADE A MOTION THAT EACH SPEAKER AT THE PUBLIC HEARINGS BE ALLOWED TO COMMENT ONLY ON CHANGES TO THE CHARTER AND WILL HAVE AN INITIAL SIX MINUTES TO ADDRESS THE COMMISSION. AFTER THE COMMISSION HAS HEARD FROM ALL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHO SIGNED UP TO SPEAK, A SPEAKER CAN SIGN UP FOR AN ADDITIONAL THREE MINUTES. MS. RODIA SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- MR. PROTO MOVED THAT CHAIRMAN FLOREK CONTACT MAYOR MIRON ABOUT POSTING THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION'S AGENDAS AND MINUTES ON THE WEBSITE, AND ABOUT GETTING THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION A GENERAL MAILBOX FOR THE PUBLIC'S E-MAIL COMMENTS. MR. FREDETTE SECONDED THE MOTION AND IT CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

5. DISCUSSION OF MEETING DATE SCHEDULE

- MR. PROTO MOVED THAT THE COMMISSION MEET EVERY THURSDAY AT 7:00 P.M. IN COUNCIL CHAMBERS, PENDING AVAILABILITY OF THE CHAMBERS.

- MR. FREDETTE SECONDED THE MOTION AND ADDED A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT THAT INSTEAD OF MEETING ON THE FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH, THE COMMISSION MEET ON THE FIRST WEDNESDAY OF THE MONTH. MR. FREDETTE THEN WITHDREW THIS FRIENDLY AMENDMENT.

- MR. PROTO MADE A FRIENDLY AMENDMENT THAT THE COMMISSION HOLD SPECIAL MEETINGS AS NECESSARY SUBJECT TO THE AVAILABILITY OF THE MEMBERS. MR. PROTO'S MOTION, AS AMENDED, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- Chairman Florek noted that for 30 days after the meeting schedule is posted with the Town Clerk, all meetings are considered "special" meetings.

6. SELECTION OF PUBLIC HEARING DATE

- The Commission discussed possible public hearing dates. No substantive work can be done until after the first Public Hearing, but next week is the February school vacation. The Commission also discussed the idea of a third public hearing in the middle of their term to let the public know what they are doing.

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- MR. FREDETTE MOVED THAT THE FIRST PUBLIC HEARING BE HELD ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2008, AT 6:00 P.M., IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS. MS. MCMELLON SECONDED AND THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- MR. BOOTH MOVED TO HOLD ANOTHER PUBLIC HEARING ABOUT HALF WAY THROUGH THE COMMISSION'S TERM. MR. PROTO SECONDED AND MADE THE FRIENDLY AMENDMENT THAT THE SECOND PUBLIC HEARING BE HELD ON THURSDAY, APRIL 24, 2008, AT 6:00 P.M., IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS. MOTION, AS AMENDED, CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

- MR. PROTO MOVED THAT THE FINAL PUBLIC HEARING BE HELD ON THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2008, AT 6:00 P.M., AT A LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED. MR. BOOTH SECONDED AND THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. SUGGESTIONS FROM COMMISSIONERS

- Chairman Florek suggested that the Charter needed tweaking, but not a major overhaul. He read the Council's suggestions into the record as a starting point:

- a. Per Mr. Forrester: Possibility of changing the appointment process for the Ethics Commission from the Mayor to the Town Council. Clarify any inconsistencies in the Charter.
- b. Ms. Wanamaker: Look at requiring a larger number of people to sign the petition to create a Charter Revision Commission.
- c. Mr. Stroomer: Clarify the verbiage in Section 2.2.15 of the Charter.
- d. Mr. Henrick: Look at the Mayor's ability to veto resolutions.
- e. Mayor Miron: Review every section of the Charter.

- Chairman Florek suggested that the Commission also look at the issues raised by the recent Charter Revision Petition.

- Mr. Orlowe suggested looking at the order of succession and the possibility of a run-off election (Town Attorney Buturla and the Attorney General have already given legal opinions that run-off elections are prohibited by statutory law in Connecticut.)

- Mr. Fahan suggested looking at the duties of the Mayor and the Council as they relate to the appointment process, as well as current emergency measures and the Rainy Day Fund.

- Mr. Booth requested the Minority Report from the last Charter Revision Commission. He would like to look at Section 5.8 dealing with Town employees, setting salaries, and hiring and firing.

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- Ms. Rodia would like to look at checks and balances in the Charter. She would also like to see Section 9.8.1 brought into compliance with State Statutes.

- Mr. Fredette would like to look at uniting the Planning and Zoning Boards again to streamline the process for developers.

- Mr. Proto stated that the last Charter Revision Commission concentrated on the Mayor and the Council, but did not really look at the rest of the Charter. Some of the provisions are antiquated. He also suggested the possibility of forming three sub-committees.

- The Commission would like to look at the Charters for Bridgeport, Shelton and Milford as well as various Town Attorney legal opinions. . Attorney Buturla is working on an opinion concerning the power of recall. Chairman Florek requested that the Commission receive these Charters and opinions prior to the next meeting.

8. ADJOURNMENT

- There being no further business, MR. FREDETTE MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN THE ORGANIZATIONAL MEETING. MR. PROTO SECONDED AND THE MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:10 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Gail J. Nobili
Secretary