



Charter Subcommittee Report

City of Newton **In City Council**

Monday February 26, 2018

Present: Councilors Baker (Chair), Krintzman, Albright, Kalis, and Karyn Dean (Committee Clerk)

Councilor Baker presented background material to the Subcommittee: a side-by-side comparison of the present and proposed charter text; a red-lined version of the edits to the Charter; and a compilation of all Charter Commission minutes, which may also be found on the Charter Commission website. <http://www.newtonma.gov/gov/chartercommission/default.asp> These materials will provide a clear idea of what was proposed, what the existing provision is, and some understanding of the rationale from the record.

The general model is to try and address those provisions that can be handled with relative ease and move the more controversial provisions to the fall; explicitly term limits and the composition of the City Council. The Chair provided a tentative schedule in a memo that was distributed at the meeting. The Subcommittee will take up several articles of the Charter at each meeting. In preparation for each meeting, the Charter Commission notes, red-lined text, and side-by-side comparison relative to those Articles would be provided to the Subcommittee members. If the Subcommittee came upon a particularly controversial provision, they could set that aside for more in-depth work in the fall.

Councilor Krintzman suggested that he could summarize the work of the Charter Commission on those Articles to start the process at each meeting. The Committee could then discuss the options and take straw votes on each Article. He would prepare Articles 1, 3, 5 and 6 for the March 21st meeting. If that process does not seem to be a satisfactory, they could consider a different procedure for April and May. Councilor Baker said it would be useful if he could look at what Councilor Krintzman prepares to see if he has any suggestions prior to the meeting as part of his job is to assist the process generally.

The Subcommittee would produce a report at the end of the spring to bring to the Programs & Services Committee with recommendations of proposed language for adoption.

It was suggested that the Preamble be reviewed. Councilor Krintzman made a motion that the proposed Preamble to the Charter (reproduced in an appendix below), be part of the recommendation of the Sub-Committee and all members agreed, with the understanding that all such votes, as in the case of the Charter Commission itself, were preliminary to be confirmed at the end of the Subcommittee process.

There was a question from a member of the public, Jack Prior, asking how the sequencing of the work would be done. In response, Councilor Baker said they would work on what are relatively non-controversial provisions first and then go forward with the more controversial issues. There will probably be one Home Rule petition for a special act of the legislature to change the Charter with any changes unless there is a clear reason for more than one such petition. The point is to capture what has been usefully done by the Charter Commission, then advance those matters to the full City Council for review and decision about what would be in a Home Rule Petition.

The Chair asked that the Charter Commission website be maintained so that it can be referenced through this process. The reports and information from this Subcommittee should also be made available online.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

R. Lisle Baker, Chair

APPENDIX

PREAMBLE

We, the people of Newton, in order to reaffirm the customary and traditional liberties of the people with respect to the conduct of our local government, adopt this charter with the expectation and intent that the charter will continue and enhance the city's strong traditions of active voter participation; ethical, transparent and responsive leadership; wise use of public resources; respect for all in the community; and an engaged populace. We expect and intend that our government will be welcoming and inclusive and will promote equality and respect for all people.