

A meeting of the Charter Commission was held on Monday, July 17, 2017 in the Town Council Chambers, 195 Danielson Pike, N. Scituate, RI. The meeting was called to order at 6:31 pm by Michael Marcello, Chair.

Members Present: Michael Marcello, Sharon Johnson, Susan Lessard, Sacha Hummel

Members Absent: David Campbell, Vincent Ferrera, Ellis Hopkins III

The meeting began with a brief introduction by the members present.

Motion made by Chair Marcello, seconded by Sharon Johnson and voted by consent to approve tabling item IA on the agenda, Discussion/Appt. of additional committee officers.

Chair Marcello explained the importance of record keeping for this committee. He asked that all members submit documents to the clerk and other members in advance or in a public meeting so that a complete record of the proceeding would be available for future issues that may arise under a charter.

Motion made by Sacha Hummel, seconded by Sharon Johnson and voted by consent to appoint Gloria Taylor as the Clerk for the Charter Commission.

Chair Marcello reviewed the Public Law 1915, Ch. 1321 and the various amendments which established the current governing structure of the Town.

Chair Marcello explained the legal difference between a Home Rule Charter and a Legislative Charter. The Town Council appointed this committee for the purpose of establishing a Legislative Charter. Of

39 cities and Towns, two, the town of North Providence and City of Warwick have legislative charters. Thirty-six other communities have Home Rule Charters, and Scituate's governing current governing structure rests on a statute that was passed by the General Assembly in 1915.

Moving forward, Chair Marcello suggested having various meetings over the next couple months with former and present Scituate town officials and officials from other communities, and review charters from other communities.

Under the current governing structure of the Town, the Town Council makes all of the decisions and had complete control over all affairs of the local government except where certain powers are given to other elected officials (ie Town Clerk or Town Treasurer). This committee needs to decide the type of governing structure that best fits the Town's needs for the future given the fact that we are operating under a structure that was established in 1915.

The four main types of government in Rhode Island are a strong Town Manager with Town Council.; Town Manager/Town Council Mayor and Town Council, and Town Council with Financial Town meeting. Within these difference types are variations like an elected town administrator or town manager versus appointed, etc.

The Town Council has asked for a draft of the proposed charter to be submitted to the Council no later than March 2018 to allow adequate time for Charter to be on the ballot in the November 2018 election.

Members from the audience asked about the difference between a Home Rule Charter and Legislative. Ruth Strach expressed concerns

about the charter reflecting Scituate as a unique Town because of the reservoir and the water shed. She also asked if there would be an absentee policy for Charter Committee Members. Tim McCormick stated he hopes the charge doesn't dictate the pace. Marti Bower stated she has lived and worked in other states with different types of government where the Town Manager handles the day to day decisions and the Town Council is responsible for policy and broader issues.

Members discussed possibly holding future meetings on the 1st and 3rd Monday of each month.

Chair Marcello stated all meetings will be open to the public as executive sessions will not be necessary since there is no exception under the Open Meeting Act for any issue that would come before the Charter Commission.

Motion made by Sacha Hummel, seconded by Sharon Johnson and voted by consent to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 pm.

Attest:

Gloria Taylor, Clerk