

Longmeadow Charter Commission Minutes
DATE: December 23, 2003 TIME: 6:35 PM-8:58 PM
PLACE: School Committee Meeting Room Longmeadow High School

This was the 26th meeting of the Longmeadow Charter Commission. Present: Susan R. Altman, Kathleen E. Grady, William Hoff, R. Peter Landon, Arlene C. Miller (Vice Chair), Roger F. Nadeau Joseph A. Occhiuti, Rebecca M. Townsend (Clerk), and Roger B. Wojcik (Chair). Also present: Mr. Thomas Groux, charter advisor. One member of the public was present.

Mr. Wojcik opened the public comment period. Dr. Thomas McGarry commented on the preamble. He said that he was grateful for our work; he felt that the charter could provide people with a vision for how to carry out their duties. He said organizational systems would need to have a feedback loop, so that it may function well. Mr. Groux noted that charters, as legal documents, must be definitive. Two good places to provide for the vision the town aspires to are in the summary report and the preamble. He noted that it is now common to see Town Managers getting involved in this area (involving assessments and visioning) through professional journals and organizations. It is common for them to set up ways to achieve feedback; it is also part of their training programs. Putting a provision in the charter that requires something along these lines might set it up for failure or controversy; Mr. Groux likened this to the U.S. Constitution, which is “bare bones”. The Declaration of Independence was not a part of the Constitution, and yet it is still an important document. Many communities do not have the resources to require continuous professional training for staff. Dr. Grady noted that the Charter is an enforceable document; the townspeople can hold their officials accountable to it. Mr. Wojcik thanked Dr. McGarry and closed the public comment period.

1. Mr. Wojcik opened **review of the minutes of December 17, 2003**. Members had not had enough chance to review the minutes in advance of the meeting so review and a vote would be delayed until the next scheduled meeting, January 7, 2003.
2. Mr. Wojcik noted that he had asked Dr. Grady to draft the Executive Summary of the Charter.
3. Mr. Wojcik and Mr. Groux led members in a proof reading review of the charter draft. Members talked about ways to make the language plain, like eliminating phrases like “forthwith following.” Ms. Townsend asked whether the group wanted to reconsider the name of the School Committee, as per a recent letter’s suggestion. Mr. Hoff replied that that might cause undue confusion, and members agreed. No change will be made to the School Committee’s name. The proofreading process will continue on January 7, 2004.
4. Mr. Nadeau moved to adjourn. Mr. Landon seconded. Members voted to adjourn. Mr. Wojcik adjourned the meeting at 8:58 PM.

Approved January 7, 2004

Respectfully submitted,

Rebecca M. Townsend, Clerk