

Longmeadow Charter Commission Minutes

DATE: June 3, 2003 TIME: 7:00pm. (Adjourned 9:30pm)

PLACE: School Committee Meeting Room.

This was the second 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), Roger B. Wojcik (Chair).
Audience: Mr. Saul Finestone

1. Donna Hunsinger, Assistant Town Clerk, opened nominations for Chair. **Mr. Occhiuti nominated Mr. Wojcik (seconded). The vote was 9 in favor. Mr. Wojcik was elected Chair.** Ms. Hunsinger opened nominations for Vice Chair. Ms. Townsend nominated Ms. Grady (seconded). Mr. Hoff nominated Ms. Miller (seconded). **Ms. Grady received 4 votes; Ms. Miller received 5 and was elected Vice Chair.** The group congratulated both Mr. Wojcik and Ms. Miller.
2. Mr. Wojcik opened the meeting by **reviewing the minutes of May 29, 2003.** Ms. Townsend distributed revised copies of the minutes previously distributed via email. In the sections describing the mandated public hearings on the 18th and 19th, Ms. Miller suggested that “meeting” be changed to “hearing.” **Following two other format questions, Ms. Altman moved that the meeting minutes with corrections be approved (seconded and approved).**
3. Mr. Wojcik asked about the **status of the High School Auditorium for the June 18 hearing.** Ms. Altman indicated that the room was unavailable. Ms. Miller reported that she emailed Bay Path College President Dr. Carol Leary’s office about requesting a facility and learned that none were available. Mr. Wojcik asked about moving the hearing to the 19th. **Following discussion of the practical work involved in having two hearings in one day, it was decided that we would try to get a different room.** Williams Middle School’s auditorium was discussed as one site we should request, since it has a real auditorium. Discussion ensued about the type of hearing we expected, specifically whether or not it would have interchange. Mr. Wojcik suggested we move the discussion on the hearing’s process until the end of this meeting, instead focusing on the dates. **Mr. Hoff volunteered to find a place for the June 18th hearing. The hearing on the 18th was changed from 7:00 (tentatively) to 7:30.** Mr. Hoff asked about the set up of the room, and Ms. Miller suggested that flat tables be set up in the front, similar to what is done at Town Meeting.
4. We discussed LCTV taping of the hearing. Ms. Grady reported that she called LCTV but has not arranged anything yet while we wait on the location. Mr. Occhiuti inquired about possibly getting a hand-held camera for the hearing on the 19th. **Ms. Grady will arrange LCTV taping once the location has been set.**
5. **Mr. Wojcik requested that he lead the discussion on the 19th; Ms. Grady volunteered to assist.** The hearing will be from 1:30pm-3:00pm in the Greenwood Senior Center Cafeteria. All members are encouraged to attend if possible.

6. We discussed publicity for the hearings. **Press releases will be sent to The Reminder, Longmeadow News, The Republican, www.Longmeadow.org, and LCTV. A notice will be posted at Town Hall. In addition, we will distribute handouts on yellow paper. Ms. Townsend offered a draft of a sample poster, and all agreed that would be fine (with the proper location).** We would produce enough copies for the Elementary Schools to put in kids' backpacks, plus enough to post at Big Y, Armata's, the Library, the Senior Center, Town Hall, plus other locations as needed. Some would be posted; some would be placed in a handout pile. After discussing what size paper and where we were able to get the best price and fastest turnaround, **Mr. Occhiuti volunteered to arrange to have the handouts printed at low cost.**
7. **Mr. Wojcik requested that someone be available to direct the hearing on the 18th, and Ms. Miller volunteered. Ms. Altman volunteered to be the backup.** Discussion ensued about assembling and recording information, as well as how to handle written comments, especially anonymous ones. Should we receive any, **we will handle each on a case by case basis.**
8. The next item to discuss was taping meetings. Ms. Townsend expressed a wish to tape record meetings for two purposes: for future research into public meeting decision-making and to aid in new duties as clerk. **We discussed the pros and cons of taping, and came to a consensus that since it is an open meeting, and taping is permitted, the group will take no action.** Ms. Townsend offered to turn the tape recorder off at any point should a member ask. Mr. Hoff expressed a preference for the tape recorder to be on the table.
9. **Mr. Wojcik turned next to the issue of office space and supplies.** With no need for a separate meeting space or computer use, all the office space we anticipate needing is a closet or archival area for storing and cataloging sample charters. As for supplies, we will use Town letterhead and the 2nd floor Town Hall copy machine for Charter Commission business only. **Mr. Wojcik will research this and speak with Cindy French.**
10. Mr. Wojcik inquired about the need for a **bookkeeper** and Ms. Miller pointed out that Paul Pasterczyk, the Town Accountant, would handle the account. Mr. Occhiuti expressed a preference for submitting requisition forms (or following any official procedure) prior to any spending of Charter Commission funds. **Mr. Hoff moved that we get approval from the Chair prior to spending funds. It was seconded and approved. Mr. Wojcik will email Mr. Pasterczyk about the proper procedure.**
11. Mr. Wojcik asked for a volunteer **Parliamentarian**. Ms. Grady volunteered, noting her previous experience as a Parliamentarian for the American Psychological Association.
12. Mr. Wojcik noted that we would need someone to be in charge of directing communication with the public. This would involve, among other tasks, writing a regular article in the Longmeadow News, as Ms. Grady verified that the editor would invite such a feature. **Ms. Miller nominated (seconded) Ms. Grady as the outreach chair. Ms. Grady and Ms. Townsend will work together on outreach.** Following a discussion on managing and handling information, the usefulness of informing the public using a variety of communication channels, individual efforts to spread news of Charter Commission meetings, and the duties individuals have to the group, it was decided that official, written

outreach efforts (on a suggestion from Mr. Landon), receive prior approval from the Chair. Mr. Landon indicated that we all have freedom of speech and judgment, and we can exercise both in our decisions to balance individual rights with the group's need to serve as a clearinghouse for information. When speaking extemporaneously with others in the public, we are urged to listen carefully and provide that information that the rest of the group has already discussed. Mr. Occhiuti distributed a handout (from a consultant who he added, would be willing to provide small amounts of pro bono work with us) about group norms and processes; Mr. Occhiuti observed that our debates on process were typical of most groups.

13. **We set up our Commission meeting schedule: June 10 & 25, July 9 & 23, August 6 & 20 and tentatively September 10 & 17. Mr. Hoff will make arrangements for a meeting room space. All meetings will start at 7:00pm unless decided and posted otherwise.**

14. **We discussed handling hearing procedures. We decided that our introductory remarks would be brief and use the language in the Home Rule Amendment, to the effect that we are to “solicit the views, comments, opinions, and proposals from the public for consideration by the Charter Commission.”** Mr. Landon had a proposed mission statement along these lines as well. Ms. Grady and Mr. Hoff suggested showing on an overhead projector or distributing a copy of the organizational Chart currently printed in the Annual Report. We decided that showing the chart is fine, but describing it might unduly lead participants' perceptions and comments. **We decided we would listen to all speeches, using a flip chart or overhead transparency to record comments and check with participants that their comments were recorded adequately. Ms. Townsend will scribe the evening session. Time limits on speeches would be 3-5 minutes, and people may speak twice only after everyone who wishes to has spoken once.** We would emphasize that this is an open process and there would be many more forums in the future. We would like to hold topic sessions devoted to a particular form of governance, among other topical areas. These first two are specifically devoted to problem definition from the public: what do people have concerns about, and preferences for? What do they identify as issues we need to consider? Lastly, we thanked Mr. Finestone for volunteering that the Council on Aging might be able to provide refreshments at the hearing on the 19th.

15. Mr. Wojcik distributed copies of the West Springfield Charter Commission Final Report and “Decision Points for Charter Commissions in Towns.”

16. Mr. Wojcik briefed the Commission on the matter of detailing activity and events that needs to be accomplished to complete the Charter Commission's work. **He noted that he would email his proposed process to us for discussion at the next meeting.**

Approved June 10, 2003

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca M. Townsend (Clerk)