



Board of Aldermen
Shelton, Connecticut
Public Hearing on Ordinances
Tuesday, August 2, 2005

CALL TO ORDER/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Aldermanic President John Anglace opened the Public Hearing at 7 p.m. All those present rose and pledged allegiance to the flag.

ROLL CALL

Aldermanic President John F. Anglace, Jr. - present
Alderman John "Jack" Finn - present
Alderman Stanley Kudej - present
Alderman Joseph Lanzi - present
Alderman Lynne Farrell - present
Alderman Nancy Minotti - present
Alderman Kenneth Olin - present
Alderman John P. Papa - present

Clerk Brigitte Plucienik read aloud the Legal Notice published in The Connecticut Post on July 26, 2005 as follows:

Public Notice
City of Shelton Police Department

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Aldermen will conduct a public hearing on the following:

Charter Revision

Said Public Hearing shall be conducted on Tuesday, August 2, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in the Auditorium at City hall, 54 Hill Street, Shelton.

All persons who have an interest therein may appear and be heard in relation hereto.

Dated at Shelton July 21, 2005

Alderman Anglace asked if any member of the public wished to speak regarding Charter Revision:

Walter Sofian, 7 Andrew Drive

I am Chairman and spokesperson of the Charter Action Review Effort known as CARE. The CARE group consists of independent or unaffiliated voters, members of the Republican, Democratic and Citizens United parties; and members of the grass roots group We-R-1. CARE therefore represents a spectrum of Shelton citizenry that is very concerned about the future of the City and still hopes that the latest Charter revisions proposed by the Charter Revision Commission will be modified to better reflect the needs of the citizens of Shelton.

The proposed Charter Revision does reflect a willingness on the part of the Charter Revision Commission to bring about some positive changes. An elected Inland-Wetlands Commission, increasing the membership of boards and/or commissions to a minimum of five members, a public initiative requiring only 10 percent of the electorate, and a five member Ethics Commission appointed by the Board of Aldermen are certainly worthwhile. However, CARE feels that the Charter Revision can and should be so much more.

CARE has been meeting every other week for the past 11 months, undertaking an independent review of the Charter for the City of Shelton, and has put forth 46 recommendations to the Charter Revision Commission during that time. While CARE was given the opportunity to freely exchange ideas with the Charter Revision Commission, it now appears that the proposed Charter Revision that was delivered to the Board of Aldermen has several sections that will not serve and protect the citizens of the City of Shelton over the next 10 years. The proposed Charter Revision before you is not responsive to the will of the people of the City of Shelton.

The top CARE priority issues that surfaced during presentation of the above 46 recommendations dealt with the makeup of the Planning and Zoning Commission, ethics standards and procedures for enacting Ordinances for the City of Shelton, and may be summarized as follows:

- Term limits for land use boards
- Increasing the size of the Planning and Zoning membership to allow all four wards of the City to be represented on that Commission;

- Conflicts of interest and tightened ethics standards;
- Fast tracking of Ordinances.

Additional recommendations of high priority to CARE were the hiring of a City Planner, and Board or Commission members holding only one elected or appointed office.

Tonight I would like to take this opportunity to offer a few suggestions dealing with the abovementioned issues that would significantly improve the current Charter Revision Commission draft of the City Charter Revision, enhance the probability of voter acceptance, and produce a document that would be more responsive to the taxpayers and citizens of this City.

Term Limits. Prior to the formation of the latest Charter Revision Commission, the grassroots group We-R-1 mounted a petition drive to impose term limits on the land use boards of the City of Shelton. The petition received a tremendous response, garnering more than 2,200 signatures of registered City voters. Ultimately, our petition was halted with the announcement of the newly-formed Charter Revision Commission. During the CARE/Charter Revision Commission discussions, CARE expressed willingness to compromise on the issue of term limits and have it only apply to the land use boards of the City of Shelton. CARE felt that this would still keep faith with the more than 2,200 taxpaying voters of the City who signed a petition to impose term limits on the Planning and Zoning Commission. However, it appears that the pleas of CARE for the imposition of term limits have fallen on deaf ears.

Increasing the size of the Planning and Zoning to allow for Ward representation. When it became abundantly clear that the final Charter Revision Commission draft of the Charter Revisions was going to ignore the will of the more than 2,200 registered Shelton voters that signed a petition for such limits, CARE respectfully requested that the proposed membership of the Planning and Zoning be increased from seven to eight members to allow for two members to be elected from each of the four Wards, while maintaining the two alternates at large. Such a move would ensure that all four City wards would be represented on the Planning and Zoning. CARE believes this is far more important than considerations of minority representation and would bring about a refreshing and much needed change in the makeup of the Planning and Zoning.

This request was similarly rejected by the Planning and Zoning. During discussion of Ward representation with the Charter Revision Commission,

the Chairman of the Board of Aldermen stated that the P&Z should represent all the City of Shelton and therefore should continue to be elected at large. However, CARE feels that the Board of Aldermen, elected by Ward, is a prime example of a legislative body that somehow still manages to represent all of Shelton's citizens.

Conflicts of interest and tightened ethics standards. With respect to the section titled "Board of Ethics," the Charter Revision Commission draft is far too vague. Simply stating that "the City shall have a Code of Ethics promulgated by the Board of Aldermen" does not serve the electorate. CARE feels that the City of Shelton should take the lead and institute a set of ethical standards that will meet or exceed any impending requirements that the State of Connecticut may impose on all municipalities in the foreseeable future. To that end, CARE had furnished the Charter Revision Commission with the Ethics section of the Charter for Town of Manchester, Connecticut. Additionally, two versions of Substitute House Bill No. 5023 from the State of Connecticut General Assembly, that were raised in the February 2004 session, but not enacted into law were also forwarded to the Charter Revision Commission. They were called "An Act Concerning Municipal Ethics Codes," and an "Act Concerning Municipal Ethics Commissions and Municipal Ethics Codes." Although the abovementioned bills did not make it through the Legislature last year, CARE believes that they provide strong guidelines for the tougher Ethics Codes that are the wave of the future and should be incorporated into the Charter for the City of Shelton. Therefore, the language required for a meaningful Code of Ethics, is already in place and has been provided to the Charter Revision Commission. The Board of Aldermen was put on notice prior to the failed Charter Revision of November 2003, that the voters expected a meaningful Ethics Code with definitive standards for establishment and enforcement of a Municipal Code of Ethics. Yet, here we are almost two years later and we still don't have one.

Fast tracking of Ordinances. With respect to referral of ordinances to committee, the Charter Revision Commission draft retains language that is very similar to the previously failed April 2004 revision. As it stands, the Board of Aldermen may or may not refer a proposed ordinance to a committee of the Board for review prior to going to public hearing.

CARE feels that all ordinances being considered should go through a Committee of the Board so that all the issues surrounding the proposed ordinance can be thoroughly investigated before reporting back to the full Board. CARE believes that the rules and laws governing the City are much too important to fast track.

Hiring a City Planner. CARE believes that the Charter Revision Commission and the Board of Aldermen should give more serious consideration to establishing a position of City Planner for the City of Shelton. This would allow for continual updating of the 10 year plan for the City of Shelton as required by Section 8-23 of the Connecticut General Statutes. The City Planner would be a dedicated employee that would become an integral part of the administration for the City of Shelton. The City Planner would oversee Shelton's land use boards and commissions and provide access for public input from the community. A more detailed explanation of the job qualifications and requirements has already been presented to the Charter Revision Commission. The salary for the City Planner, which may appear to be a stumbling block for this recommendation, would be somewhat offset by eliminating the Planning and Zoning consultant and not requiring the periodic contracting of a City planning firm like Planimetrics. The plus side would be an integrated approach for land use and development issues and closer adherence to the City's 10 year plan currently being developed.

Board/Commission holding more than one elected or appointed office. Under Section 5.5c, titled General Provisions, for this proposed Charter Revision, members of the various Boards and Commissions are allowed to hold no more than one elected and one appointed office. CARE feels that this is a bad idea for the City of Shelton. Over the last 10 years the City has grown too large and the issues too complex and time consuming to continue to allow elected or appointed officials to hold more than one office.

And finally, what you've been waiting for – the conclusion. In the final analysis, CARE can say with pride that we have provided for a free exchange of ideas with the Charter Revision Commission and the Board of Aldermen to make known what we feel are the will of the people. However, as stated above, CARE feels that the Charter Revision before you is not responsive enough to the will and needs of the people of the City of Shelton, and should be revised to include the recommendations discussed above. We are coming down to the final hour. After almost a year of effort on the part of CARE and the Charter Revision Commission, it is still not too late to make the Charter Revision a document that all the citizens of Shelton can be proud of.

There can and should be some movement on the part of the Charter Revision Commission to establish some additional meaningful reform and/or update, on the above mentioned issues, for the Charter of the City of Shelton. We can and should produce a Charter Revision that

better serves the needs of the City of Shelton to guide us over the next 10 years.

Thank you very much.

Anthony Simonetti, 6 Hayfield Drive

Thank you for the opportunity, ladies and gentlemen of the Board. The Charter that we have at this time in place has served the City very well. I feel that this Charter Revision Commission did a very good job in what they put together at this time. The Charter itself is something that needs to be updated by State regulation; it should be done to keep us current as much as possible. But I feel any large changes or changes that are overly done could throw the City into a problem. I think it's served us well; we should keep it as simple as possible – keep the changes that the Charter Revision Commission has put together and let it go at that. I don't think any changes should be made from what is there.

Thank you very much.

Irving Steiner, 23 Partridge Lane

Ladies and gentlemen of the audience and members of the Board of Aldermen, I speak before you tonight as both a private citizen and the co-founder of We-R-1 as I did during the previous failed Charter Revision effort. During that previous effort, I attempted to revise the ethics section of the Charter because I felt that the Charter was ineffective in supporting formal ethics complaints against administration officials who clearly, by Charter, Ordinances and the facts at hand, demonstrated conflicts of interest. My last minute attempt and appeal to this Board to strengthen this Charter failed. Such behavior and indifference by the Board of Aldermen, I felt was insensitive. No one on this Board chose to devote the time to determine if there was a substance to my allegations that our Charter was ineffective and the system did not work.

This Board's apparent lack of interest and indifference spurred me and, in turn, We-R-1 to make every effort to defeat that Charter and I feel that we were effective in helping to convince the electorate to do just that. The last straw was the several conflicting comments made to the press following the Charter defeat by the Chairman of this Board.

One glowing remark was "the Charter has been defeated, I guess the people must be happy with the old Charter," and almost in the same breath, "the people just don't understand." I have to interpret both

these remarks as oxymorons, if oxymorons can be defined as opposing sentences and not just limited to words. If the people liked the Charter and voted the new Charter down then they must have understood or the people did not understand the Charter and therefore voted it down. I would like to ask the chairman as to which interpretation of his remarks following the last Charter defeat is he choosing to stick with? Also following reactivation of the present Charter Revision Commission and after reading that the Charter Revision Commission is not debating the issues with CARE, the Chairman commented to the press that if it is a debate that CARE wants, we will give them plenty of debate. Mr. Chairman, CARE is here in front of you and we are still waiting for the fulfillment of your promise for debate.

Prior to the Board's action regarding the previous Charter, We-R-1 was concentrating on what We-R-1 thought was a problem that was confined to the Planning and Zoning Commission. The problem was their out of control patchwork approach to development as dictated by their favorite son developers. Development that in many instances even violated the very ordinances and regulations that the Planning and Zoning themselves had created. Unfortunately, as it turned out, extended to other departments including the Board of Aldermen and executive branch.

The problem included this Charter, its need for revision and upgrading and to the very officials charged with this responsibility. It also extended to this administration's failure to provide policy, leadership and direction to the land use boards and this board's failure to insure and maintain long range programs such as Charter Revision, 10 year plan and 10 year fiscal plans.

It is hoped that this Board will take a moment to reflect on the following thought – two charters have failed. Contemplate the impression that a third failure would have, and its interpretation by the general public. Could the public have misunderstood the revisions to the Charter three consecutive times? Would a third defeat of the Charter indicate that the general public is again happy with the present Charter? If, in your own heart, you say no, then it is your responsibility to insure that the general public is educated to the changes, if any, that you are proposing, or you, as a Board must accept the fact that this administration has lost touch with the people and you must regain that touch and in turn, their confidence.

It is the public's quest to have a revised Charter that reflects their ethics and desires for the present and the future. Please do not forget, you have not only been elected by the people but also for the people and we

wish to return the "for the people" back to that sentence. I would like to take a moment and quote CARE's first chairman and former Mayor, the late Gene Hope, a Republican and a mentor to the present mayor. Gene Hope e-mailed me on August 11, 2004 regarding boards and commissions. He stated "the boards will view any effort to alter the "status quo" as a direct threat to their unchallenged authority which is frequently abused. They have forgotten that the Charter exists to protect the rights of the people of the City of Shelton and not the autonomous power of the boards and commissions who were elected or appointed to represent and be accountable to the people."

If We-R-1 continues to correctly interpret public opinion and sentiment, the present revised Charter will be defeated for a third time. At the last meeting of the Charter Revision Commission, Chairman Paul DiMauro made motion to delay the vote on the Charter until 2006. This motion was opposed by the majority of the Charter Revision Commission. It would be a sad day if the citizens of Shelton are required to vote on a Charter, whose quality and substance is again in question, and a sadder day of the politics of November were to delay the referendum until 2006.

In closing, I would like to remind this commission that the Charter, if not on the ballot in November, will not affect our resolve. The Charter has become a symbol for the people of this community. A symbol of this administration's repeated but failed attempts to increase their absolute power in spite of legitimate and constructive criticism by the public. The vote in November, with or without the Charter, will be to decide whether this administration will be given a fourth chance in an attempt for another Charter Revision.

I thank you for your time.

Arlene Liscinsky, 54 Country Ridge Drive

Only as recently as last week it had come to the attention of the Shelton Board of Education that the Charter Revision Commission has recommended that the political makeup of the Board be changed to a 6-3 makeup versus the present configuration of 5-4.

It has also come to the attention of the Board of Education that the Charter Revision Commission recommended that the Chairman's term limitations also be eliminated.

These recommended changes came to my attention last Tuesday evening after returning from vacation. This being the first I had heard of these

proposed changes, I researched this and brought this issue up at our regular Board of Education meeting last Wednesday. I am not only a citizen, but I also sit on the Board of Education. Not one board member had heard of these proposed changes, including the Chairman of the Board, nor was the Board of Education given the consideration of being formally notified of these proposed changes. As a result, our Superintendent of Schools was instructed to notify the Charter Revision Commission Chairman as to the rationale behind these changes and also when this issue was discussed and voted on. Our Chairman agreed to put this issue on our agenda for discussion on last night's meeting.

In researching the minutes and based on the discussion the Superintendent had with the Chairman of the commission, it was noted that nowhere was there any explicit conversation in the minutes specifically regarding a change of the Board of Education configuration, nor was any vote of agreement taken to make these changes. These changes were made very recently in fact, and when the question of the background, the Charter chairman mentioned that a consensus of opinion was taken. However I must mention that if you refer to the June 7th minutes page 2 it states, "no consensus was needed" and referred to the State Statute Section 9-167a.

I will also reference that the minutes of May 24th and June 14th, that "although there was discussion about the issue of minority representation, it only refers to other boards with the Board of Education used as a reference."

I would also ask that you reference Section 9-204 of the State statute which seems to be a little ambiguous.

As Chairman of the Policy Committee for the Board of Education I must tell you both these items are contrary to our present bylaws. I must also tell you that although no formal vote was taken last night, it is the opinion of the majority of the Board of Education members that the standards of the democratic process should be higher than the State Statute recommends, and that the 5/4 majority representation has worked very well for this board and should be left alone.

It also is of the opinion of the board that the term of the Chairman should be a self-governing issue left up to the Board of Education.

I may also remind the Board of Aldermen and Charter Commission that the Board of Education by law is an agent of the State Board of Education and not the municipality, and that the charge of any Board of

Education is the interest of the children first and foremost in this community.

I have taken a survey of several surrounding towns and would like to submit this to you for your viewing. As a citizen of this community and as one member of the Shelton Board of Education, I would also ask that these two issues be given back to the Charter Revision Commission for the purposes of discussion and review with the Board of Education and Charter Revision Commission as fair consideration to the Board of Education and its members be considered.

I thank you for your time and deliberation. Also, there is a copy of several contingent towns of the Board of Education makeup, there is a copy of the 9-204 minority representation along with 9-167a, a copy of our by-laws that states the two areas that I referenced, and there is also a copy of the Charter that the change is made in. Thank you.

Tim Walsh, 42 L'Hermitage Drive

I'm also a member of the Board of Education and very concerned about this minority representation issue. The Board of Education, more than any other board, should be a bipartisan board. In fact, in Arlene's research which she didn't bring forward, Connecticut is only one of three states where Board of Education members run on a political party. In most states, they run unaffiliated. I know my son is on the Board of Education in a small community in Massachusetts, and there is no political representation when they run, which is probably the best.

The 5-4 in our discussion last night, both Republican and Democratic members were present at the Board, concurred that it's functioning properly and fine as it has gone along, and why change it. We've had our differences of opinion certainly, but on a great number of issues, the board has voted 9-0. It has worked. Why tinker with it?

I think there are a couple of things in there that I would support. I think the revision of budget submission is for the benefit of everyone, because right now we prepare our budget in November; it's just too early to get proper forecasts for a budget that is enacted in May. I think that is a positive part of the new revision. I also differ with Mr. Sofian, because excluding the board members from sitting on any other board or commission is an encumbrance that I think is not fair, because I really believe, although it hasn't been the common practice, that Board of Education members should sit on a School Building Committee just for communication. I know the Chairman has often talked about positive

communication; I think that would be one of the best ways. This new proposal precludes that from happening. So again, I oppose the 5-4 and I hope the Board of Aldermen could see fit to refer that back to the Charter Revision Commission to correct it and restate, and as it has been it has worked fine. And again with the other thing – I won't reiterate.

Thank you much.

Tom LaTulipe, 91 Toas Street

I've been involved with CARE going through the Charter and I can tell you that many hours were spent on this and there were no personal gains for anybody that served on that. Mentioned here tonight were some of the items, but not all of the items, that were discussed. In particular, one that I brought up was Police Commissioners. I knew at the very start that this would probably not go any further than making the presentation to the Charter Revision Commission. However, it has come back to me through the grape vine, "what do I have against the Police?" Well, I can tell you this, and I have my wife here to back me up on this, this evening. I have neglected my family to support the police – not only on the local level, the State level, the national level. When Ella Grasso was our representative in Washington, D.C. and the other man, I can't recall his name now, he helped pushed through, and I was very instrumental on that, with Chief [?] to gain a \$50,000 death benefit bill for law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty. That was very time consuming, just as the CARE group went through this Charter. I have talked to several chiefs and I have a meeting coming up on the 18th where I will be in their company again. They come from very fine departments all through the State of Connecticut. I have yet to find one chief that has a problem with the Commissioners. When it was brought before the Charter Revision Commission, there were some very bad remarks passed about police commissioners and I think that there should be an apology made on those statements made. If you want to take and condemn everybody, look what we have in the clergy. We don't condemn all the clergy – just the individuals that are involved – the individuals that get into that position to get their own personal gains. We have firemen, we have policemen, we even have politicians that are a disgrace to the community. Why did they disgrace the community? To make their own personal gains. The people that deserve the credit, like you fellas up there, and you women too, can't neglect you, serving the community. You're not overpaid that's for sure. I don't think you can pay a good policeman in the City of Shelton enough money for the job he's got to do. You can't take and give any policeman written proof that he is going to return home after his tour of duty. You don't know what's

going to happen during his tour of duty. We've been very fortunate here in Shelton, but with the population increasing the way it is, and with the transients going through, God bless them. Pray for them every day because one of them might not go home. That's how strong I feel. I'm not just going to hit on commissioners. I offered to the Charter Revision Commission to have someone from the Commissioners Association come down and speak to them. They would be willing to come to speak to you. They're not getting paid. They'll show you the benefits of having commissioners. I feel very strongly about it. I have nothing to gain by it, only my time that I lose by being away from home to try to promote something like that. Because I firmly believe in my heart, I worked under Commissioners for 25 years. Did I have problems with the Commissioners? You bet your life I did. I was the first president of a police union to represent the police department. Up until that time the Commissioners had the total say over the Police Department. God forbid we should ever have a situation like in Waterbury where the Mayor has control over the Police Department. How could they possibly investigate the case that he was involved in – thrown in jail on? If Commissioners were there, that might not have gone as far as it did. He might have been out a long time before he did get out.

Anyway, the CARE group went through the Charter, line by line, and they made recommendations, and truly, maybe some of the recommendations weren't worth what we thought as we went through it. But if some evidence comes up or some information comes up to change our mind, we're flexible on that. But when we have the facts, please pay attention. As it stands now with the present Charter the way it's being submitted, I will vote "no" on it.

Thank you for your time.

Chris Panek, 19 Meghan Lane

With all due respect to an earlier speaker, I would have to beg to differ that someone would ask that we not make any major changes to the Charter. The fact of the matter is, the City is changing. We're growing. We're facing new issues – issues that do call for change to the Charter.

I would agree with Mr. LaTulipe that this Charter Revision process cannot become a political football. I personally have nothing to gain. My concern is about the community as a whole. This Charter is going to lead us for the next 10 years.

The Charter is a very powerful and important document that is going to lead this City for the next 10 years, and I certainly, personally, have not spent, you

know, so many meetings with the CARE group. The CARE group met more than the Charter Revision Commission did. We reviewed the document from front to back, and most of us also attended nearly every Charter Revision Commission meeting, not because we have anything personally to gain, but because we want to make sure that the document that goes to the voting booth in November is the best for the next 10 years.

I think there is a common theme with a lot of these revisions that are in there or that are not in there. The common theme is "power." As everyone knows, Shelton has a very powerful mayoral form of government. The mayor has a lot of power. People have personal opinions and that is fine – whether the mayor should have this power or shouldn't have this power. It doesn't matter if it's a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent mayor, regardless of who is in there, after this November's election, or who is in there in the next 10 years. The mayor is going to have a lot of power and that's not going to be changed with the snap of a finger and changes to this charter. However, currently there are checks and balances in place that keep that power in check and allow other City boards to share in the power and to make sure it doesn't go beyond a certain limit for the mayor. That is where I feel the common theme throughout these changes, allowing elected board members to also hold appointed positions, and I'm not sure if there is a stipulation between a commission and a committee as Mr. Walsh said, I would agree, if a Board of Ed member wants to be on a Technology Committee – that's fine. But should we have a Board of Aldermen member on another commission – the Inland-Wetlands Commission, the Parks & Rec Commission, should that be allowed? Should an elected Alderman be allowed to exert his influence over another commission with power in the City?

The bypass of the committee process in the Ordinance making. This is – we're talking about making laws that govern this City, and we want to remove the Committee process from that? We want the Board of Aldermen to be able to bypass sending an Ordinance mandatory or sending an Ordinance to committee by a majority vote.

In regard to the Board of Ed issue, which I really had not paid a lot of attention until the recent press, and Mrs. Liscinsky pretty much covered it all. I, today, went to other Charters from other towns that I had collected during our CARE meetings. Most of them call for a bare majority. Does the State Statute allow for it to be increased to six members? Yes.

But is that most beneficial for the City, and especially for the children of the City – do we want the Board of Ed to become that politicized?

Requiring City employees who report to a board or commission to have mandatory reporting on a day-to-day basis to the Administrative Assistant. Who does that give more power to?

Removal of the power of the elected Board of Apportionment and Taxation to award contracts. Who is that giving more power to?

These changes do not help our democratic form of government. To follow up on one more comment that Mrs. Liscinsky made, I reviewed a lot of minutes today from the past year on the City website of the Charter Revision Commission and some of these changes, including the Board of Ed changes, besides attending personally most of the Charter Revision Commission meetings, I could not find any specific discussions from the Charter Revision Commission members on some of these changes – specifically the Board of Ed changes. Also, at the last minute, it was agreed months ago that they were going to change an elected official being allowed to serve on an appointed commission, but at the last Charter Revision Commission meeting with virtually no discussion, it was changed back for some reason. I would ask, who is suggesting these changes, where did these changes come from. If they're not in the minutes of the Charter Revision Commission, who put these in there and who decided that these were best for the next 10 years of the City?

I hope that some of these suggestions this board can take, send back to the Charter Revision Commission, keep it open for discussion, and let's hope for the benefit of all of the residents that this document – the best document with the best changes – and not every single change that CARE wants or anybody personally wants – but the best document – goes to the ballot in November.

I thank you for your time.

David Collings, 187 Rocky Rest Road

I've been a member of Company 4 since 1977. I am here representing myself and not the Fire Department – I want to make that clear.

I would like to commend the Charter Revision Commission – I think they've done an excellent job. They've laid out a very nice structure for the Fire Department with the Fire Chief, the Deputy Chief and the Assistant Chiefs. I

would like to suggest that they take one last look at Section 69354, which is the Officers Council. They have set that up to be the Fire Chief, the Fire Marshal, and the Captains of the various companies. At the moment that would be six people or their respective designees. They're leaving out five people that are between the Chief and the Captains, ignoring the full chain of command and the availability of the expertise it would bring in reviewing policy recommendations – both on the operational and the administrative side. I merely suggest that section should be looked at again. Thank you.
Nancy Steiner, 23 Partridge Lane

My name is Nancy Steiner and I speak to you tonight as an original member of We-R-1 and of CARE, the group of concerned citizens formed to study the Charter, and to suggest changes that would result in a better Shelton.

As you know, We-R-1 was originally created out of frustrated residents whose R-1 neighborhoods were being invaded, and I might add still being invaded, by high density housing. Signs that have been up and down many of the main streets of our town have read, We-R-1, fighting overdevelopment in Shelton. We are for responsible development, we are against overdevelopment.

My own personal interest in working on Charter Revision is land use boards and commissions. Although some sound decisions have been made in the past several years, I feel the general trend in development has not followed the 10 year plan, and that there was a serious misuse of the PDD which I describe as just another name for spot zoning. I have seen increased traffic and the loss of the rural flavor of Shelton.

Redevelopment of Shelton's downtown has been far too slow. Overdevelopment in other places, such as Ward 3 and along Bridgeport Avenue and other parts of Shelton has been entirely too fast.

As I look through the proposed new Charter revisions, I see very little that addresses this sensitive and critical issue of overdevelopment, which affects every single member who lives in this City and their quality of life. Adding one more board member to the Planning and Zoning board is not enough. We have suggested and we need, ward sensitive elections for Planning and Zoning. All wards should have representation in Planning and Zoning but not a single member of Planning and Zoning is from Ward 3.

Is it any surprise then, that Ward 3 has been under fire right and left with high density everything? We are already stuck with the blasting and

mining operation called Split Rock that is slowly becoming a landscape of Grand Canyon cliffs and ugly little shrubs. Even fighting for keeping the stream and trees along Bridgeport Avenue as a natural buffer in front of Split Rock is a losing battle. The stream got shorter and shorter being pushed underground, with more and more trees disappearing.

At Wellspring, Ward 3 again, all the mediocre bushes planted to take the place of the noble trees which were not meant to be cut down – that was an “oops” by the developer – these bushes are mostly dead from lack of care and will need to be replaced but they will never replace the original stand of trees which did not need to be cut down.

Let us not forget the two Avalons, Avalon 1 - 302 affordable rental apartments threatening Cranberry Bog, in our last area of undeveloped woods in Ward 3

TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

which, by rights, the town should have purchased for our embattled ward, we really need some open space. But oh no, buy up open space in the more northern parts of town, where farms still abound. There is a letter on record from the Conservation Committee to consider the purchase of these last 23 acres of undeveloped land in Ward 3, but no action from the City. Consider again in Ward 3, Avalon 2, the 171 more apartments taking R-1 land from Huntington Street. Add to this the 202 apartments in a building 17 stories high, being planned, again in our Ward 3, in the Scinto corporate campus and the total is a staggering 504 new places to live in our Ward 3. Well hooray for us. And guess what, according to the applicants, there will be no change in traffic, very little change in the school population, no, just business as usual – even though they’re adding 504 new places to live in Ward 3. Business as usual - which I might add, is choking traffic and schools that are already overcrowded.

I don’t see any changes in the proposed new Charter Revisions that answer the problem of overdevelopment. We-R-1 has 2,200 signatures who are in favor of term limits for land use boards. Do not these people deserve a chance to vote on term limits? We would have gotten even more than 2,200 signatures but we were told by the State to shut down when the Charter Revision Commission was resurrected. I believe our petition was why the Charter Revision Commission was restarted.

And as concerned citizens, we wanted to give the Charter Revision Commission our output, we felt that a group of caring and intelligent

residents who were willing to give up several evenings a month for many, many months would be and could be a help to the Charter Revision Commission, a chance to hear and consider fresh ideas presented in a logical format designed by Gene Hope, former Republican Mayor of Shelton who together with Mike Pacowta, former Democratic Mayor, Chris Panek, head of citizens United, and Irving Steiner, cofounder of We-R-1 a most talented and awesome foursome, working together with other concerned citizens for the good of Shelton. Sounds like a great team. When Mayor Hope passed away, Walter Sofian, in spite of severe back problems, faithfully led our meetings as we slugged our way through the Charter, section by section by section.

I am telling you this so you will understand the depth of my disappointment that my most important issue, land use boards and committees, have not really been restructured enough to make a difference in how those boards will work.

Look around you – do you see a sea of faces? I think not. In the past quite often, your attendance at these meetings has jumped when the word was gotten out to the general populace of the importance of a coming meeting. And in many instances that word was gotten out by private citizens printing and distributing handbills, handmade signs on lawns, notices to the news media, all done by private citizens. I know because my husband and I are two of these private citizens. Regarding this important public hearing you probably followed the letter of the law in printing a public notice in the newspaper, which is probably the very least effort that could be made. But if this charter is so important to you, and if you really want a public hearing, why just a tiny public notice last week – easily missed by most people, even if they are concerned, why not more publicity coming from the City regarding this meeting? It just so happened that my husband and I were away on vacation and didn't return until after the publication of the public notice, and the agenda, which my husband faithfully goes to the City Hall every Friday to see if he can find an agenda for the following week – sometimes it's done and sometimes it's not – it wasn't done. He couldn't get it until yesterday. It was only available at City Hall yesterday, the notice about this meeting, so not much time to get out the word, so not much of a showing tonight.

There is so much at stake here. Please let us work together to keep the quality of life in Shelton intact. Please listen to the people who elected you. Thank you for your time.

Mike Pacowta, 166 River Road

Ladies and gentlemen of the board, I, too have been a member of the CARE organization Charter Action Review Effort and I can honestly say I was witness to and a part of month after month after month of very dedicated focus and service to the analysis of the document that you have in front of you tonight, passed on to you by the Charter Revision Commission.

I'm not going to reiterate all of the other things that were said by the speakers representing CARE, however, I want you to know that around that table, politics was eliminated and it was the opinions of these people, because of their concern of the community in general, it was their concern for the fact that they view the community growing and the fact that they fear that the current document as inadequate to address the issues necessary to assure that Shelton maintain its rural character and they were just concerned because they live here and love this community.

The one thing more specifically that I do want to touch on also was sort of the August surprise, because we had no – I had no awareness as a member of CARE that this provision within the Charter that allows for the minority representation of the Board of Education to diminish from four minority members to three was included. I want to agree with the speakers before this that had said that, you know, if there is any place where we should absolutely eliminate any type of politics if possible, if we lived in a perfect world, it would be in the area of education. I personally feel that the closest thing we can get to in terms of perfection as it pertains to the member makeup of the board is to have it as close as we can in number as a bipartisan board.

I would stand greatly in favor if possible to send this document back to the Charter Revision Commission for them to reconsider the larger spread they now have between members of a majority party and those of a minority party, and please return it back to the 5-4 representation that I believe has worked so successfully, and for the children, for so many years.

Thank you.

Sean Sullivan, 2 Horsestable Circle

I apologize for some redundancy – obviously there are many people that have an opinion on the Board of Education. The revisions to the Charter have been presented, voted down twice, reviewed, revised and are now presented before this Board once again.

During the previous iterations I've remained silent because there seemed to be many flaws, and I felt the revisions wouldn't be passed. However, tonight I'm very concerned about the proposed changes to the Board of Education.

How is education being served by changing the majority rule on the Board from 5-4 to 6-3? Even though the City tends to vote party lines for public office, the diverse needs of the students should be served by a diverse Board of Education. How is education served by removing the term limits of the Chairman? There must have been a reason why the original authors of the Charter put limits solely on this Board. How are the children of the City served by changes to the Board structure which will give more power to one party over the other?

At last night's special Board of Education meeting, Chairman O'Leary did not want to bring to a vote to the floor to recognize this issue because he thought it was too political. But it is this Board and the Charter Revision Commission who is recommending these changes and the Board of Education that are all political bodies. I simply think that mandating a 67 percent majority by Charter is not in the best interest of the students of Shelton. At least now when one person from the other party is swayed by the deliberation or discussion they can make a difference.

I am disappointed that the Charter Revision Commission and the other independent groups have not raised this issue sooner but I hope there is still time. I assume that we are in public hearing on this document so you can still make changes that are in the best interests of your constituents.

Please remove the proposed changes to the Board of Education structure which unnecessarily modifies the balance of power and will not provide a better education system for our students.

Thank you.

Tom LaTulipe, 91 Toas Street

I just remembered the gentleman's name. Stewart B. McKinney. He was a Republican. He was our State Representative and he was the one that spearheaded the \$50,000 death benefit bill for law enforcement officers. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace asked if any other member of the public wished to comment on the Charter Revision changes as presented. Being none, he called for a motion to adjourn.

Alderman Papa MOVED to adjourn; SECONDED by Alderman Finn. A voice vote was taken and the MOTION PASSED 8-0.

Alderman Anglace thanked all of the members of the public for coming out and sharing their views with the Board members.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia M. Bruder
Clerk, Board of Aldermen

Date Submitted: _____

DATE APPROVED: _____ BY: _____

Mark A. Laretti
Mayor, City of Shelton