



CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

MEETING

Tuesday, May 10, 2005

The meeting for the Charter Revision Commission was called to order by Paul DiMauro at 7:07 P.M. in Room 104 at Shelton City Hall.

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Attending: Paul DiMauro
Michael Davis
Joe Konner
Bob Lally
Sue Coyle
Steve Bellis

Absent: Irene Smith
Gary Cahill
Charles Carroll
Ann Dougherty

Paul DiMauro opened the meeting for public input at 7:08 pm.

******TAPE PLAYER FAILED, TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE
AND THE HANDOUTS PRESENTED TO THE CRC THE
FOLLOWING OCCURRED:***

Walter Sofian: My name is Walter Sofian, 7 Andrew Drive, Shelton. As the chair and spokesperson of CARE, I would like to furnish to the CRC Recommendation 46 dealing with Section 9.7 Conflicts of Interest for your consideration.

CARE recommendation 46 expands the scope of a conflict of interest beyond any elected or appointed official or employee. The

recommendation would include any consultant, vendor or contractor who by virtue of his office, or relationship with office holders, may influence matters in which he or a member of his direct family has a personal financial interest. Such interest shall be disclosed on the public record with the City Clerk and to the body or person that he is responsible to or associated with.

CARE feels that the City of Shelton should be taking the lead and adopt 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.

Term Limits: All the outset of my becoming the Chair and spokesperson for CARE, succeeding former Mayor Eugene Hope, CARE pledged not to blindside the Charter Revision Commission by pushing the case for any of our recommendations in the court of public opinion. CARE had abided by that decision and believes that their committee was treated fairly, courteously, and afforded every opportunity to exchange ideas with the CRC. Therefore, CARE was quite surprised that Mr. DiMauro decided to address the issue of "Term Limits" in a recent Bridgeport Post interview, stating "that's one item that won't be addressed. I'm not in favor of them. Mr. Chairman, CARE wasn't aware that this had been decided, well before the CRC is scheduled to present a final draft to the Board of Aldermen.

Additionally, the Bridgeport Post article stated that the CRC will be recommending the addition of two more members to the Planning and Zoning Commission. This suggestion was initiated by the Charter Revision Commission, and CARE agrees that this is a very good idea. Indeed, that was the context of my statement that said, "We thought that would be a step in the right direction." We realize that this would give more citizens the opportunity to serve on the P&Z and controversial projects would require a higher affirmative vote count for passage. No projects that have a dramatic and permanent effect on the landscape of the city of Shelton should ever be passed by a vote of three to two. However, CARE thinks expanding the size of the P&Z Commission doesn't preclude the establishment of term limits.

During the CARE/CRC discussions, CARE expressed willingness to compromise on the issue of term limits and only apply it to the land use

boards of the City of Shelton. This would still keep faith with the more than 2,200 taxpaying voters of the City who signed a formation of this current Charter Revision Commission.

CARE feels that term limits for the P&Z are a very high priority issue with their committee and with the citizens of Shelton, and should be incorporated into the latest Charter Revision. Failing that, CARE requests that the issue of term limits be brought before the electorate with a separate referendum, question.

Ward Representation – Much of the major development projects taking place in the City are in the third ward, which currently has no representation in the Planning and Zoning Commission. Although CARE recognizes that the Route 8/Bridgeport Avenue corridor is zoned for office, commercial, and retail use, we feel that some of the more recent development that has been approved, such as a seventeen story apartment house, is inappropriate for the city of Shelton. Therefore, with regard to the P&Z, CARE believes that the election be conducted so as to ensure that all four wards of the City of Shelton.

CARE thanks the CRC for your time and attention.

Mr. DiMauro at this time explained that he was indeed misquoted and that his opinions were his and not the CRC.

Irving Steiner: Two years ago, I stood in front of this body as one of the Co-founders of We –R1. Almost the same faces were in front of me. We-R1 was in the early learning stages of what I call “Shelton 101”, trying to learn as much as we could as fast as we could about how the city works, and we had only just found out that this body was in session. The first words that I heard were from Chairman DiMauro and they were “Where have you been for the last year? We are about to close but this is the kind of input that we have been looking for.” I went home that evening, encouraged by his remarks and I spent the next twenty-four hours of time, with legal help, to attempt to make a positive change to the Ethics portion of the charter before the deadline. The results of my effort was an initial acceptance of my change, as recorded on the initial charter revision submitted to the City Clerk and then, basically, a reversal back to the original version, as submitted to the City Clerk shortly thereafter. The bottom line to this: My effort was for naught.

My appeals to the BOA session that approved your submission were also fruitless. In the closing of my speech that evening, I stated that without improvements to the charter, We-R1 would make every effort to defeat it for a second time, and it happened. Although you may not agree, We-R1 gladly takes some of the credit for the failure of that charter, and for the creation of this present commission, established after our organization successfully garnered thousands of signatures on a petition to impose term limits. The BOA decided that the only way to effectively shutdown our successful petition prematurely was to reactivate this commission. You may remember a statement by BOA after the vote that “the citizens voted down this charter so they must be happy with the charter as it stands” or words to that effect.” A statement by John Anglace that couldn’t be further from the truth. If you doubt that we were instrumental, read the admissions of BOA chairman John Anglace as recorded in the BOA minutes of the 24th of June 2003 that created this present commission. Our main reason for rejection was based not only on this administration’s failure to improve the document but the administration’s desire to further defang the instrument and increase the micromanagement of departments by neutering various department chairman responsibilities. This time, we want more than cosmetic changes to the document.

Thomas LaTulipe spoke regarding forming Police Commissioners.

Bernie Simmons and Judson Crawford representatives from the Board of A&T also requested to sit with the CRC. They will be invited to the May 24th meeting.

The public portion concluded at 7:50 pm.

Michael Davis made a motion to accept the minutes of April 12, 2005 and April 26, 2005. Sue Coyle second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The Charter Revision Commission met with Corporation Counsel Thomas Welch.

Tom Welch: Pursuant to your request we have had the opportunity to review and research three inquiries as forwarded to our office by your clerk, to wit:

1. ***Section 4.6 Investigation – Our understanding is that a question was raised as to the ability of the Board of Aldermen to issue subpoenas relative to the Board’s investigative powers.***

Pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes section 7-148 a municipality does not permit the issuance of subpoenas by the Board of Aldermen.

2. ***Section 4.7.3 Hearing – My understanding is that a question arose relative to the proposed language “without requirement of a vote” please note that we believe the insertion of said language is not necessary for the reason that the word “shall” mandates that a public hearing be held.***

In addition, in reading Section 4.7.2. in conjunction with the revised 4.7.3. we would suggest that Section 4.7.3. be further amended to provide that “within 35 days after the referral to the Board or if referred to committee pursuant to Section 4.7.2. within 30 days after the committee has reported back to the full Board.

3. ***Section 6.8.2. Powers and Duties – Our understanding is that a question arose as to the necessity for the addition “and shall report to the Administrative Assistant”.***

Pursuant to Section 6.1.2©, the Administrative Assistant assists the Mayor in the supervision of all officers, departments and other agencies of the City. Based upon the foregoing, the supervision of the Director of Health would be by the Mayor and the Administrative Assistant. The concern we have relative to adding the language is you would then have to add it to each department that the Mayor and/or the Administrative Assistant supervised. Therefore, our conclusion is that the proposed revision is not necessary.

The foregoing comments are based upon the inquiries as we understood them. We did not have the benefit of your minutes or discussion regarding same. If further research or communication is necessary, please do not hesitate to contact this firm.

The meeting with Corporation Counsel Thomas Welch concluded at 8:42 pm.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, May 24, 2005. Counsel Thomas Welch and Counsel John Welch will be invited to attend. Bernie Simons and any representative from the Board of A&T will also be invited to the next meeting.

The Charter Revision Commission is requesting that all members of the Charter Revision Commission attend the next meeting of May 24, 2005. Discussions will include term limits and population as well as all boards. A consensus will be taken for recommendations from Chapters 1 through 4 as well as going through with the proposed changes.

There will be a special meeting scheduled for June 7th as well as the scheduled meetings for June 14th and June 28th. This is due that time is running out and the CRC needs to finalize all changes before being presented to the Board of Aldermen.

ADJOURNMENT

Sue Coyle motioned to adjourn. Bob Lally second the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Paul DiMauro adjourned the meeting of the Charter Revision Commission at 8: 47 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Sophia V. Belade
Sophia V. Belade
Clerk-Charter Revision Commission

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