



**CITY OF SHELTON  
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES  
June 17, 2020  
1:00 pm, Auditorium  
City Hall**

Commissioners Present: Dan Debicella  
Gary DeFilippo  
Ruth Ann Dunford  
David Presutto  
Darlissa Ritter  
Donald Sheehy

- CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Debicella called the Public Hearing of the Charter Revision to order at 1:00 pm.

- PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

- **Shelton Charter Revision – June Public Hearing Rules**

**Rules for Live Hearing (Wednesday, June 17<sup>th</sup> at 1PM)**

1. Coronavirus protocols will be followed by all participants, including social distancing of six feet and wearing of face masks.
2. Each member of the public shall be able to address the Commission for a total of five minutes. People shall sign up with the clerk at the start of the meeting, and shall be called in the order they sign up. The Clerk shall time each person's remarks, and give a one-minute warning before their time is up.
3. Members of the public may also submit written statements of any length to the Clerk of the Commission. These shall become part of the record of the meeting, but shall not be read out loud unless the person is present in which case, they may speak for five minutes as per above.
4. Commissioners may ask questions of the public if they so choose at the conclusion of any individuals remarks. Length of time of questioning and answers is at the Chairman's discretion.
5. All comments should be civil and pertain to ideas for changes to the Charter. No personal or ad hominem attacks shall be allowed, and the Chairman may rule out of order any comments not related to Charter changes.

Joseph Knapick

People with any political sense who follow charter revision would, I believe, agree that any positives are minimal that the mainstay of revision is a political power grab orchestrated by the Lauretti administration.

After failing at a May 8<sup>th</sup> vote to table the budget the Mayor said of A&T, they'll never meet again. Of course, lack of A&T meetings for considerable time is an established fact in violation of the current charter and Governor's Executive Order.

Except for expressed concerns of administration on wishes, Shelton government has functioned. In essence, appointed positions have provided needed diversity, both for Democrats and Republicans. Voters have a say, vote wise on all individuals on the ballot. If a position is not in accord, voters have a say, yet a certain amount of independence is preserved. A trend towards monolithic government is tempered. And that's where we're going, monolithic all the way.

Shelton's historical governmental arrangements need not be tampered with. We should be similar to other towns, not stand out like a sore thumb for political purposes.

Thank you.

Commissioner DeFillipo had a question he asked, do you think that A&T is elected or appointed? Mr. Knapick responded it's appointed mainly by Town Committees and elected by the voters. The voters can decide who's done the best and worst job on the A&T because they are on the ballot. Commissioner DeFillipo continued, I bet if you go back 20 years, both parties nominate 3, my personal opinion and I'm a member of the Town Committee, we're not electing them, we're appointing, so our theory in our group here was that we want the public to decide who the elected officials are. Just like the Board of Ed, we wanted to give them a choice. Same thing for Planning & Zoning. That was our theory, to give the power to the public.

Mr. Knapick stated but the A&T provides the analyzing and transferring of the City budget. The A&T has diversity and it doesn't have the final say of budget, the Board of aldermen does, but I think it's a dimension worth having as been historically in effect for a very long time. Commissioner DeFillipo replied I can respect your opinion, other Charters have taken away power. In reality all this board has power is to go over line items and transfers. I would like to see, since the Democrats didn't put up candidates for Aldermen. That's where they should run. Mr. Knapick stated it's a necessary dimension to the inclusive process. The more opinions you have the more opinions are considered and the more inclusive Shelton government is.

Ginny Harger

Good afternoon everyone, I'm here today as the Chair for the Planning & Zoning Commission. I have the revisions that are being imposed and on page 16 under P&Z section 5.2.3.4 (a) it should be carried out to the subsection for

alternates not being able to hold no other elected or appointed positions or the wording thereof.

I understand with the proposal to increase the members of commissioners to 7, 4 is a quorum and when I was flipping through previous sections and the top of the page for Board of Education, when talking about the first regular meeting of the Board of Education and election of the chair, that is not included in the Planning & Zoning Commission, so there have been some hiccups about that. I thought that might be something that you would like to include as well.

The next thing is, the bottom of page 16, the Chairman shall if a regular member is unable to participate then an alternate will replace, so what is the option is there isn't. Chairman Debicella responded there is no alternate, so to specify there is no alternate of the specific party? Mrs. Harger responded correct and I have received comments why do you want to and an explanation as to why you want to do it again because the commission has pretty much operated in a non-partisan manner over the years and a lot of people thought that this would make it partisan. Chairman Debicella replied we actually went back and forth on this, we originally eliminated all the alternates and made it just 7 and Ruth Parkins, when she was on the commission stated that if there are other boards people have to recuse themselves whether it be a conflict of interest, etc, so there is a need for alternates. Then we went to 1 alternate and we'll have them be competitively elected, but then we said, actually sometimes Democrats will be recused and sometime Republicans will be recused, so we ended back at 2. The theory being that if a person has been elected from a political party and for whatever reason that they can't vote, we'll just put them there as that political party, someone else from that party should be their substitute. Mrs. Harger continued, just to look over the numbers regarding a quorum. You can never foresee, as well attended as the commission's meetings have been, you never know if something happens last minute, that's all.

Thank you.

No other member of the public wished to address the Commission. Chairman Debicella closed the Public Hearing at 1:14 pm.

Commissioner Ritter motioned to adjourn. Commissioner Dunford second the motion.

A voice vote was taken; motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sophia V Belade*

Sophia V. Belade  
Charter Revision Clerk