Board of Aldermen
Shelton, Connecticut
July 23rd, 2020 Special Virtual Public Hearing Meeting
Minutes on Revisions to the City Charter

CALL TO ORDER

Alderman Anglace called the Special Board of Aldermen Virtual Public Hearing Meeting on Revisions to the City Charter to order in the Auditorium at Shelton City Hall at 6 p.m. All those present stood and pledged allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Roll Call

Alderman John F. Anglace, Jr., President- Present
Alderman Eric McPherson, Vice President- Present
Alderman Cris Balamaci- Present
Alderman David Gidwani- Present via phone
Alderman Stanley Kudej- Not Present
Alderman Noreen McGorty- Present
Alderman Anthony Simonetti- Present
Alderman Bernie Simons- Present

Alderman Anglace welcome everyone to the meeting and asked those who signed up to speak to come to the podium when their name is called by the clerk. Comments were also emailed prior to the meeting and have been added to the public record.

Kevin Sheehy, 225 Riverview Avenue *(not present – emailed comments)*
I am opposed to 2 recommended items - elimination of the A&T Board and the increased majority representation on the Board of Education. I believe these would both decrease the voices of the minority party in this city and are unnecessary.

Susan Steiner, 24 Carley Street *(not present – emailed comments)*
Keep the board of apportionment and taxation as it is.

Edward Donovan, 87 Nichols Avenue *(not present – emailed comments)*
I do not support and vote NO to the following charter revisions. No to the elimination of the Board on Apportionment and Taxation and No to the increase of the majority party maximum—-keep the Board of Education balanced not shifted politically. I vote YES TO THE expansion of the Planning and Zoning Commission. I do support increasing the level of bonding for the Board of Aldermen and to standardize the term length of most appointed boards and commissions.

Stephen Massad, 20 Sylvesters Way *(not present – emailed comments)*
The following Charter revision changes are NOT about expanding voter choices and are NOT giving more power to the voters. Please reconsider and remove them and think about what it would be like if the R's and D's were reversed. The changes are short-sighted, ill-advised and partisan. Removing all or most traces of opposing political party views is detrimental to compromise and eliminates and minimalizes the opportunity to make sure all Shelton citizens' views and priorities, including those of the silent majority and silent minority, are considered.

First, it is not in the best interest of the Shelton taxpayers to have the Board of Apportionment and Taxation abolished. Currently, they are the only board that asks questions openly in the public to elected officials, boards and commissions. These are questions that need to be asked and answered in an open and transparent government WITHOUT condescending comments in reply. Furthermore, the board is the only bipartisan board that has any checks and balances on the city finances. Removing this board does not provide more power to voters. On the contrary, it lessens the power and transparency and hides the inner workings of the city finances from public view. We all know the FOI process

is cumbersome and easily side-stepped and with this Charter revision, it will be the only remedy left to Shelton voters to request transparency from their government officials.

Second and similar to the Board of A&T removal, it wasn't hard to see this one coming the second the Charter Revision process was announced on 12/11/19. The Board of Education representation split should NOT be changed from '5 to 4' to '6 to 3'. This would eliminate ALL compromise and automatically institute a 2/3 majority to pass any agenda at any time for any reason. Shelton might as well not have any minority representation at all if it wasn't for state statutes. Again, think about if the elected R's and D's were reversed in an alternate universe. There are plenty of opportunities to offer input without spearheading political agendas. Don't eliminate any and all compromise and appearance of transparency in a quest to win the war on education.

These changes are power grabs for a currently in control political party, which is NOT the majority of Shelton registered voters. It may never happen in Shelton, but if the party votes flipped, would you all want to have no say in your government?

Wayne Bragg *(not present – emailed comments)*
I am a 30-year resident of Shelton. I am accounting faculty for UCONN's MBA Programs and was a Finance and Accounting executive at both Pratt and Whitney and at Sikorsky Aircraft where I was Controller and responsible for a $1 billion budget. My comments are based on over 40 years of experience in preparing, analyzing, controlling and teaching budgeting.

I am a former member of the Board of Apportionment and Taxation (A&T) and, a current member of the Shelton Democratic Town Committee. I am here to speak against CRC's recommendation to abolish the Board of A&T. I have three points to make.

First: I want to bring to your attention the disrespectful manner in which your Charter Revision Commission (CRC) handled the public session in June. These meetings are intended to allow the public to provide feedback and should not be used as an opportunity to attack individuals. The amount of condescension and derision was unparalleled. On several occasions I had to personally ask the commission to please behave in a professional manner. That is unacceptable. Next: With regards to the CRC's stated goals: They said they wanted to give voters more choice while providing more checks and balances so that government branches do not do things unilaterally. They stated that the way the Board of A&T is currently elected does not provide voter choice because members cannot be removed.

That is a false choice. Your own RTC caucus proved that when you were unhappy with the elected officials on A&T and BOE you simply removed them from the ballot and replaced them with new candidates giving voters a different choice. So, this is not really about providing voters with more choice. This is about centralizing control and minimizing oversight.

In terms of checks and balances, eliminating A&T puts $128 million of revenue and expenses all in the hands of one legislative body without any independent oversight. Your recommendation to consolidate and eliminate A&T's responsibilities, empowers the BOA with complete and unilateral control of all the city finances and budgeting. That means the alderman can approve legislation, fund the legislation and decide when to spend. That contravenes the concept of segregation of duties and checks and balances. In Accounting 101, that's akin to having one person writing checks and also reconciling the checking account. That is a recipe for future financial problems, as we know.

The CRC's recommendation disregards A&T's long history of providing financial oversight prescribed in our charter and that has precedence in CT mayoral forms

of government. By the CRC's own research, they found that 18 cities (including Fairfield, Oxford, Newtown and Trumbull) or 90% of 21 cities with mayoral forms of government had a functioning independent Finance Board or Board of A&T. But CRC chose only to support their recommendation citing the three cities or the 10% that did not have finance boards. This is a biased conclusion. Municipal budgets and Finance Boards are the very foundation of an effective and efficient government and they promote transparency that develops public trust. There is no one process that receives more public scrutiny than the budget.

Lastly: That brings me to the real problem - the Budget process. Not even addressed by the CRC. The current flawed process produces an inaccurate budget with unexplained surpluses created by overstating headcounts. The existing budget does nothing to improve the efficiency or quality of services delivered to the public. This disconnect between the headcount and budgeted expenses frustrates department heads looking to improve their services and diminishes their accountability, performance, and management control. The very foundation of a strong budget.

The guiding body for Municipal finance boards, Government Finance Officers Association, states: that a key principle of municipal budgeting is to have mechanisms in place to ensure compliance with the adopted budget which requires setting goals, allocating resources, evaluating performance, providing feedback and making adjustments. The goal is to produce and issue accurate budgets, timely reports with publicly available performance information to promote transparency and trust. This is why at the federal level we use the GAO, CBO and OMB to not only help prepare the budget but also provide oversight. We have seen during Covid, that our budget process has no such capacity. We should be running revenue and expense scenarios and analysis to assess risks and virus-related financial impacts. Instead we did nothing. We held the budget the same. That is not good fiscal control.

It is not a city's right to spend tax dollars it's a privilege that our elected officials earn through demonstrated transparency and accountability.

Therefore, we must do what is in the best interest of the city and its citizens not what is politically expedient. Eliminating A&T, removes an oversight role that fosters debate, discussion and communication with the public. This change will have an deleterious effect on the fiscal management of this city for years to come. Do not eliminate A&T.

Louis J. Dagostine, III, *(not present – emailed comments)*
Dear Members of the Board of Aldermen and Charter Review Commission:
Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in connection with the proposed Charter revisions. While I disagree with several of the proposed revisions, I appreciate the time that members of the Charter Review Commission ("Commission") have volunteered to this important endeavor.

I am a resident of the 4th Ward and a former elected Member of the Board of Apportionment and Taxation (2013-2017). I currently serve as an elected Member of the Library Board and Shelton Democratic Town Committee. The comments are my own and not those of the Library Board or the Shelton Democratic Town Committee.

First, I wholeheartedly disagree with the proposed elimination of the Board of Apportionment & Taxation ("A&T") and transfer of complete control of all the City finances and budgeting to the Board of Aldermen ("the BOA"). A&T is an important, independent and bipartisan elected board. AT&T provides an additional layer of review of the City's budget. If A&T is eliminated, our local government would be entirely restructured in order to remove a check and balance.

Regardless of the political makeup of its members, the BOA should not receive any additional authority over Shelton's finances. Conversely, Shelton should keep and maintain an independent A&T that is authorized to participate in the budget process and to provide its own review and recommendation of the budget. I do not believe there is any drawback in having additional sets of eyes from both political parties on A&T review the City's budget. Complete eradication of a duly elected board is simply not warranted.

Second, I disagree with revising the Charter to lower minority representation on various elected boards, including the Board of Education. We should support robust debate, not restrain it. We should encourage bipartisan decision making, not stifle it. Changing the Charter to allow one party to control the City's boards is not justified.

In sum, I encourage the BOA to reject the Commission's proposal to eliminate A&T and to lower minority board representation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Joseph Knapik, 23 StoneWall Lane

In regards to the Board of Apportionment & Taxation aspect of Charter Revision we have seen our Charter change in the structure and function of government. The Lauretti administration has orchestrated that the Board not do its job since June of 1919. Now the Lauretti administration seeks to legitimize its actions by proposing the elimination of the Board of A&T. A puppet board, Charter Revision, advanced its predetermined views to the Board of Aldermen. Will the Board of Aldermen right this travesty? This arbitrary coup at its origin bespeaks a certain dictatorship. Hardly a legitimate plus for the City of Shelton. Let's grab more political power by reducing the size of the Board of Education. Control is not enough. Absolute control is sought. This will aid the Lauretti administration's forever ongoing monetary fight with the Board of Education. Dictatorship doesn't

do well for Shelton's image. Virtually every town has a vibrant functioning tax board and a Board of Education not constantly at war. Let's encourage diversity in government, not one-man rule. Thank you.

Michelle Laubin, 6 Corn Hill Road

Good evening and thank you for taking my comments. As I said to the Charter Revision Commission a few weeks ago, you have before you a proposal that represents an enormous, missed opportunity. The Charter could have been revised for the better, to provide for a better Shelton and a better government. Instead, what you have before you represents a blatant power grab by the incumbent administration, aided by your hand-picked CRC, and abetted by the Republic controlled BOA. Now the voters will get to decide.

Before we get there, I want to respond briefly to a few things that I heard from the joint meeting between the BOA and the CRC where the CRC recommendations were presented to you. Because of the time limitation on public comment, I'm going to limit my comments here to the central issue of removing the Board of A&T from the charter.

The CRC patted itself on the back for "working in a nonpartisan way" and "collecting a wide variety of ideas". Nonsense. The CRC was Republican controlled and hand-picked by the Mayor's administration. They made a nice showing of collecting ideas at the beginning of the process, and then proceeded to reject anything that did not fit with the wishes of the current administration. Mr. Simonetti asked whether the CRC obtained input from the various Boards before proposing these changes, and the CRC pointed to all of the people who came and spoke before them during the public participation process, myself included. Let me be very clear: no one from the CRC reached out to me, or anyone else on the Board of A&T, to ask for our thoughts on the proposals as a member of the Board of A&T. I participated because I followed the process and came to the public hearings as a member of the public.

Time after time, I heard the CRC refer to wanting to promote “checks and balances”, but they did the exact opposite, The phrase “checks and balances” speaks to the powers of different branches of government to hold one another in check. It was repeatedly conflated with voter accountability, which is the power of the voters to vote someone out who does not represent the public well. We were told that because the Board of A&T is “appointed” by nomination coming from the DTC and the RTC, and the people nominated are usually voted into office by virtue of their nomination, that makes the Board of A&T invalid as a “check and balance”. More nonsense.

First of all, this overlooks the fact that the Board of A&T is elected on the ballot, and that other candidates for the Board of A&T can run for it and compete with those nominated by the DTC and the RTC. If you want more “voter choice” then nominate more candidates and encourage more people to run for office to make it competitive. Instead, the CRC proposes to limit the number of candidates for any city board who can run from any political party to the number of seats that can be controlled by that party, so that administration’s choice candidates from the RTC don’t even have to put up a fight against independent minded Republicans and independents who want to run for the same seats.

Secondly, whether the Board of A&T is elected or appointed in your mind doesn’t have any bearing on the importance of its function in the roles of “checks and balances”. In the federal government, as in Connecticut, the three branches of government are the legislative, the judiciary, and the executive. Two of the three branches – the legislative and the executive are elected. The third, the judiciary, is appointed. Judges are nominated by the executive branch and confirmed by the legislative branch. Just because the judicial branch is appointed does not make it invalid as a branch of government. It performs its role as a check and balance on the other two branches of government, and by virtue of being appointed, is actually considered to be above the political fray and less subject to

political pressure. They can just concentrate on getting it right, and not on how they are going to pander to voters to get reelected.

The role of the Board of A&T, regardless of whether you consider it to be elected or appointed, is just as important in our charter and in our city government. However, until last year, it was treated as unimportant and superfluous. What happened last year? For the first time in a long time, the Board of A&T, by a narrow one-vote majority, voted to adopt a budget that was different from the one proposed by the Mayor. We actually did operate in a bipartisan fashion, took the process seriously, asked a lot of questions of the department heads who actually did show up to the hearings (which isn't all of them), debated the budget, worked hard and came up with compromise that provided more funding to education than the Mayor had proposed and less funding to some of the other departments that are repeatedly over-funded year after year. Despite the fact that Mayor had enough votes on the BOA to make sure that our proposed budget was overturned, according to the process laid out in the current charter, that wasn't enough. When the time came to review the charter, he spoke in public and demanded that the CRC eliminate the Board of A&T from the charter. They complied.

Mr. Anglace stated that the only power of the Board of A&T that is being transferred to the BOA Finance Committee in the current charter proposal is the power to make intra-department line item transfers during the course of the fiscal year. Frankly, the only reason that is the only role left to the Board of A&T during the regular fiscal year in the current charter is because this Mayor and the BOA have revised the charter in the past to systematically strip the Board of A&T of its important role in managing the city's finances. But, as we just discussed, that is not the only role of the Board of A&T. The central role of the Board of A&T in the current charter comes at budget time when it is time to examine the proposed budget and set the tax rate for the upcoming year. The Board of A&T actually runs the budget process, chairing the hearings, and taking the lead in

questioning the department heads, and then, assuming it has the votes, it adopts a budget and sets the mill rate for the city. The Board of A&T is currently 3 Republicans and 3 Democrats, and if there is a tie, the Mayor can vote and break the tie. But that's not enough power for this administration. The BOA can overturn this budget using the process in the current charter, and in fact, that is what happed last year. But that's not enough power for this administration, either. I submit that the Board of A&T's role is extremely important in the process and if it is not going to be improved through this charter, at the very least, it should not be eliminated.

Mr. Anglace also stated that even if the Board of A&T is eliminated, the "recommendations" of the Board of A&T can still be submitted to the BOA though the public hearing process. Don't believe it for a second. The only reason that the Board of A&T has access to the budget runs and the back-up documentation is because we are members of the Board of A&T. The public never receives the back-up documentation from the departments and cannot ask questions of the department representatives during the budget hearings. We do it now because that is what we are elected to do, and we represent the public in this process. I want the public to know that if this proposal is adopted, your voice in the budget process will be greatly diminished, if not eliminated altogether.

The CRC had a choice, which they discussed in their comments last week. They were either going to eliminate the Board of A&T or make it into a true Board of Finance, with all the powers that a Board of Finance should have. But the administration is seeking to consolidate power, and so the proposal you have before you is not to create a Board of Finance, but to eliminate the Board of A&T. What you will have going forward, if this proposal is adopted, is exactly what happened with the budget process this year. The deals are made behind closed doors, there is no meaningful public participation in the process, and no one will know what is happening with their tax dollars until it is too late, and the surplus disappears, and now the BOA says that they need a charter revision to be able to

borrow more money, because they need to fill a budget deficit in spending and they don't want to raise taxes. In my view, this is not an improvement in the process, it is a tremendous loss.

The slogan that you have assigned to this, that this proposal is an improvement in "voter choice" is an insult to the intelligence of the voters of Shelton. As the old saying goes, you can put lipstick on a pig, but it's still a pig.

James Orazietti, 8 William Street

I am here tonight as a private citizen. I currently serve as the vice chairman of the Shelton Board of Education, but I am here speaking as a private citizen. I first spoke about, what I am going to speak about tonight which is minority representation on the Board of Education, ten years ago, as a Democrat. I am currently a Republican. I suggested it again. I believe that the current situation of a 5-4 split, when each party puts up five members where they run for the Board of Education, we are circumventing the will of the people. Only one person is going to lose. Now the CRC is suggesting that it be a 6-3 split. I want the public to understand, that does not mean it would be a 6-3 split. It could very possibly be a 5-4 split which the public is choosing. Ten years ago, I came before the Charter Revision and I said it was un-American if we are not being allowed to choose who is on the board. We get candidates who run because they are from a specific party whether it be Democrat or Republican, they are eliminated by other people who are running who receive less votes. That is circumventing the will of the people. That is nullifying the voting rights of people who have voted for them. I know what the State Statute calls for. I know that the State of Connecticut Board calls for 6-3. My interpretation of minority representation is 'we won' and what I mean by that is, everybody should work for their position. Everybody should be qualified. Everybody should be voted for. I went to the Charter Revision, there was not any person who spoke before the Charter Revision, who would deny that it's circumventing the will of the people. That, like I said before, is un-American. It's not what we are about. We should be able to elect our officials. It would be the same as saying we have eight Board of Aldermen but we

want minority representation on there. I want three. I want three minority parties, whomever is the losing party, I want them on the board. That doesn't work. That's not what we are about. A 6-3 split is more than fair. I think that's plenty of minority representation. Like I said, I spoke about this ten years ago, as a Democrat. I am speaking about it as a Republican ten years later. I am speaking about it as a Shelton resident, as a citizen of the State of Connecticut, and the United States of America. I truly believe you are circumventing the will of the people by this minority representation. I can see one or two, if you have to go three, that's fine, but I think it needs to be changed. I do not like circumventing the will of the people. Thank you for listening.

Judson Crawford, 8 Jordan Avenue

First, changes to the new charter revision, there was one thing that hit me the first time I was reading this, is the Board of A&T should be expanded from six members to seven members. As the CRC already put in for P&Z. This would eliminate tie vote. Two. Why was the bidding number changed from $7,500 to $25,000? Was this passed by the Purchasing Agent? Three. Something that was not discussed at Charter Revision but when the city goes out to bid for a new vehicle and a company from out of our municipality submits a bid that is lower than the second bidder who is a merchant here in Shelton paying taxes to the City of Shelton, it would be up to the Board of Aldermen, that I would like to see put into effect, that any instance, such as this, that a certain percentage, which the Board of Aldermen would have to come up with, would be affected on to that bidding. If you go to the Purchasing Agent right now, he is going to tell you, "Oh no, I've heard this for the last ten years." Thank you.

Florian Hurlbert, 10 Overlook Terrace

The charter revision to the Board of Education is terrible all around. It mainly hurts the voters and reduces their choice as to who represents them. The current charter allows each party to put up nine candidates for the Board of Education. Eighteen for the public to vote on in total if all candidates are put up. The majority

gets five candidates and minority gets four. This gives the voters a choice to not only which groups get to be the majority but also who from that group gets to make the decisions. This revision would cut that pool down to six candidates from both sides eliminating the voting pool to only twelve candidates. Plus, with the 6-3 system, the voters get no choice as to who gets in from the majority party. Every candidate from the majority party just gets in. This is a huge blow to the voter's options and prevents party dissent by making a system for people who disagree to be pushed out. The Board of Education is supposed to be bi-partisan in nature. The current 5-4 system gives a fair ratio to allow for both sides to contribute and come to bi-partisan decisions. A 6-3 system makes it less bi-partisan. This gives way more power to one party and that is not the way education is supposed to be. Taking away power from the voter and making our Board of Education more partisan. All these changes are for the worse.

Mary Pavliouk, 67 New Street

I walked about 30 minutes to get here today, so I hope you listen to what I have to say. I am a student speaking on behalf of SHS Students Fight for Change. I am here today to ask you to please vote against the charter revision that will allow a 6-3 split on the Board of Education. I believe that partisan politics have no place in education. A bi-partisan board allows representation of both parties including four minority members to serve as a check. To ensure that the system of checks and balances is upheld, we must not allow for full party control of the BOE. Three members of the minority party is not enough to serve as a check. There is no room for the interests of parents of children who may have an opposing point of view. It is a proposal that in itself sets a precedent for partisan decision making. Decisions about education should not be a partisan charade rather a bi-partisan effort to do what's best for all students, parents and teachers. A 6-3 board will only encourage the majority members to work together and shut out the remaining three members of the board. Again, this sets a dangerous precedent. As a current student in the school system, I unequivocally reject this

change. Please reconsider before you pass this charter as is. It affects education for the entire City of Shelton.

Patrick Burden, 88 Maple Avenue

Commented [AF1]:

This Charter Revision doesn't even try to hide it's partisanship. It's a ridiculous expansion of power by the majority. The minority party loses its voice entirely. Discussion and debate can't be fair with when a majority of six voices overwhelm the other three. As it impacts the Board of Education, the school system will suffer as well. Dissenting views will be ignored as such the parents will have much less success in trying to reach out to the Board of Education to air their concerns. On a larger scale, community residents with dissenting views would find it much more difficult to have their voices heard. Voting options would be reduced from 18 candidates to 12. That charter revision goes against our value of democracy as a whole. Unfortunately, I can't help but feel it is quite intentional. (Inaudible)….is that when this decision will finally appear as unjust and unfair?

Ruth Parkins, 21 Meadow Lake Drive

Good evening. I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you regarding charter revisions. I would first like to commend and thank the Charter Revision Committee for the time they have invested in this task. As you may be aware, I served on the CRC for a short time. As a former member and chair of the P&Z Commission, I have advocated that the provision under, what I believe was formerly Section 5.1 which is now 5.2.3 remain as is, as I truly believe that any member of the Planning & Zoning Commission should not serve on any other board or commission. As I read the redlined version, I was surprised to see that the provision had been eliminated, but reading further into the revisions, I noticed that Section 5.4 C addresses the issue. I appreciate the Commission's efforts to create uniformity in the charter, which they have done a really good job amongst the boards and commissions but as I said, as written now, I believe it still proposes a potential conflict for the P&Z Commission. The Commission is a very important board as you are well aware. The first issue that it poses is that state

statute prohibits any member of the ZBA Board, which is an appointed board, from serving on Planning & Zoning. Number two, I think it presents a potential conflict with members of such appointed boards such as the Conservation Commission or Inland & Wetlands which has their own area of specialty. I would just ask that the deletion of this provision be revisited or reworded and that consideration be given to the Planning & Zoning Commission being it is a little bit different from other boards in terms of conflict with other members serving on it. Right now as the CRC has it worded, and this is just a general provision which goes across all boards in uniformity, which I appreciate, but it says, “members shall hold no more than one elected municipal office and one appointed municipal office or two appointed offices within the city.” I think there is some ambiguity there and I think it should be clarified. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mark Holden, 275 Soundview Avenue

Good evening. When former Senator Debicella handed the charter revision document to you, he claimed it would give more power to the voters. The truth is the document before you systematically increases the power of the Mayor, while removing check and balances, and reduces voter choice for the Board of Education. If this proposed charter passes, the Mayor will decide who to hire for city positions. It greatly increases his power. He will be able to choose the members of the Ethics Commission, and while the charter requires no more than two from one party, the appointment of the Charter Revision Commission showed that is easily bypassed. One of the unaffiliated members was a Republican a week before he was appointed and nobody on the DTC knew the lone democrat on the committee. The Board of A&T will be eliminated. That board has been consistently weakened since Mayor Lauretti took office. If they had the authority they used to have perhaps we wouldn’t have had an Assistant Finance Director embezzle a million dollars. A&T has conducted the budget interviews for many years. It was six extra sets of eyes to review budgeting proposals. Will the aldermen continue the level of scrutiny that the Board of A&T

provided? Common sense in our charter should call for using a different auditor on a periodic basis. If the same person is auditing our books year after year, they are apt to miss the same things year after year as happened when we had the embezzlement problem. The Charter Revision doesn't address this problem. The proposed changes to the Board of Education will reduce the number of people who can run with party endorsement. In six elections from 2009 to 2019 we had an average of 12 and a half candidates on the ballot for nine seats. Both parties have usually run more people than they could elect with a majority limitation. The proposed charter will reduce voter choice in the general election and increase the odds that we will need to hold primaries. I don't believe the Library Board's provisions work. It calls for electing seven members in 2021. However, several members have already been elected to terms that will not expire at that time. Under the proposed charter all appointments are made by the Mayor subject to BOA approval. But in Shelton, at the moment, the Mayor demands the right to approve all republican candidates for every office including the aldermen. I am happy to see the inclusion of an IT Committee. I encouraged Alderman Anglace to provide this concept several years ago, but I am concerned the committee as proposed is heavily skewed to city control. This isn't about budget. The BOE has a much greater need for technology and in many instances state or federal agencies determine what capabilities they need. Yet the charter proposal calls for them to nominate only one third of the members. The document wasn't properly passed by the Charter Revision Commission as they failed to meet FOI and Executive Order requirements by not posting the agenda in advance, not putting the meeting on the internet, or posting a copy of the document you will be voting on within 24 hours of the meeting. This unnoticed meeting was on July 8th. The document you are reviewing is dated the 10th. The only thing that has been transparent about this charter revision is the determination to put together a proposal maximizing the power of the Mayor with as little public scrutiny as possible. Last year many of you worked to make sure I had more free time. Unless significant changes are made, I would be actively encouraging people to

vote against this charter proposal. This proposed charter is not good for the future of our great city. Thank you.

Thomas Harbinson, 15 Soundcrest Drive

Good evening. The newly added Preamble troubles me, because it implies that in the "establishment" of this Charter, prior Charters and citizens before did not share values of liberty, equality and representation. There is confusion in the tense of words, and the terms "establish" and "formed" imply this is a first run-through of these concepts and values, even though they were embraced by citizens prior who voted for previous Charter adoptions.
I also am reminded that when my father immigrated to the USA, his first night was spent in Shelton with John Curtiss, at the time owner of Curtiss Brothers Garage, and subsequently founder of the car dealerships bearing his name. I was reading through an old pilot's log book of my Dad's, where he was documenting his flight hours to obtain his commercial pilot's license, flying from Island Airport in Shelton along the river to Monroe and Ansonia airports, Danbury and beyond. My point is that he wasn't a "citizen", only a "resident" of Shelton, laying down roots to work here, raise a family here, and then starting a business here (at 93 Canal Street where the Veteran's Memorial now stands). He did eventually become a citizen, as did my Mother who worked as a nurse at Griffin Hospital and local convalescent homes for many years prior to raising her hand with an oath to be a citizen of the United States of America. They were simply residents for a long time with their contributions to our community before they joined the melting pot. We must never forget that the formation and operation of our government, from the national level to the local, is for benefit of more than those who are just "citizens".

The Charter Draft proposal of a PREAMBLE: We the people of Shelton, proud citizens of the State of Connecticut and the United States of America, do hereby adopt this charter to define how our government is to be formed and operated. Since our founding in 1789 as the Town of Huntington through today's City of Shelton, we have always strived to provide a home where families can find prosperity and happiness. We strive to be a "city of choice" that provides a high quality of life for all our citizens. To that end, based firmly in our shared values of liberty, equality before the law, and representative government, we hereby establish this Charter of the City of Shelton.

My suggestions to the Draft PREAMBLE: We the people of Shelton, proud citizens of the State of Connecticut and the United States of America, ~~do hereby adopt this charter to define how our government is to be formed and operated.~~ S~~i~~nce our founding in 1789 as the Town of Huntington through today's City of Shelton, ~~we~~ have always strived to provide a ~~home~~ community where families can find prosperity and happiness~~. We strive to be a "city of choice"~~ that ~~provides~~ offers a high quality of life for all our ~~citizens~~ residents. To that end, based firmly

in our shared values of liberty, equality before the law, and representative government, we hereby ~~establish~~ adopt this Charter of the City of Shelton.

My suggested PREAMBLE, clean: We the people of Shelton, proud citizens of the State of Connecticut and the United States of America, since our founding in 1789 as the Town of Huntington through today's City of Shelton, have always strived to provide a community where families can find prosperity and happiness that offers a high quality of life for all our residents. To that end, based firmly in our shared values of liberty, equality before the law, and representative government, we hereby adopt this Charter of the City of Shelton.

Virginia Harger, 26 Meadowridge Drive

Good evening. Earlier this afternoon I had a chance to go through the revisions to the charter of July 10th and I have a few comments that I will go through quickly. First, page 4-5, Section 2.4.1 Officials Section (e) where it talks about the Planning & Zoning Commission consisting of seven members I think there should be a reference inserted here to Section 5.1 Minority Representation and I would assume that the Charter Revision Commission has looked at the current terms of the current members to make sure that the staggered terms that are suggested in 2021 and 2023 do not conflict with current term timeframes.

Next on page 10, Section 4.3.1 Meetings and Section 4.3.2 Quorums & Actions and Section 4.3.3 Procedure, which all refer to the Board of Aldermen meetings…I think all that similar language should be added to where its talks about how the Planning & Zoning Commission should run it's meetings. I think it should be inserted on Page 17, under Section 5.2.3, that similar language regarding Meetings, Quorums & Procedures, should be inserted here.

Page 17/18, Section 5.2.3 Planning & Zoning Commission Section C, the first sentence is fine, talking about when the Commission would choose a person to be a chair, and the last two sentences are fine, which talks about the chair shall appoint all committees etc. but the middle portion of it, that came to me as quite a shock. This is all new language and it states: "Within (30) days after the Chairman is chosen, the Commission shall appoint a Clerk of the Commission (whose compensation the Commission shall establish), who shall attend the meetings of the Commission, take the minutes, and prepare and maintain the records of its proceedings." The issue I have with this is that this particular person would be on the city payroll. I believe that the chair of the Planning and Zoning Commission should be hiring someone to serve as Clerk of the Commission and deciding compensation that is being paid by the City. I don't think the commission as a whole should determine what the compensation should be. I think that should be in line with other people in that same type of capacity doing minutes for other boards and commissions. I think this is language that should be part of Section 6.10 for the Administrator of Planning and Zoning to oversee. On page 33, Section 6.10 that is where is should say it's the

Administrator's responsibility to choose the clerk and that person should fall under whatever compensation other boards and commissions should be. Of course, the administrator would be working with the Personnel Director so that the position is posted and whatever happens there. I do not believe it should be the responsibility of the chairperson to do all that.

Finally, on page 50, Section 9.6 Vacancies, subsection B states that, "If there is no applicable law or Charter provision, the vacancy shall be filled within forty-five days by the remaining members of the same political party on the board, commission, or other body." Our Planning and Zoning Commission has alternates. I don't think this language is clear whether ot not the alternate republican member or democrat member should be part of that voting if that ever has to occur. Those are my comments and I know how difficult it must have been to do this. This is very time consuming and I want to thank all the members for trying to bring this document up-to-date for the city. Thank you.

Alderman Anglace: There being no one left wishing to speak, I want to thank the members of the public who came out tonight to be heard. Have a good night.

ADJOURNMENT

Alderman Simonetti MOVED to adjourn the Public Hearing on Ordinances; SECONDED by Alderman McPherson. A voice vote was taken and hearing was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Theresa Adcox

Theresa Adcox, Clerk

DATE APPROVED: _____ BY:_____

Mayor Mark A. Lauretti