

SPECIAL MEETING

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Members of the public who wish to provide public comment are encouraged to submit those via email in advance of the meeting. For these comments to be read into the record, they should be submitted at least three hours in advance of the meeting start time. Please email Zulma Roundtree at zroundtree@norwalkct.gov to provide written public comment prior to the meeting.

ATTENDANCE: Patsy Brescia, Chair; Richard McQuaid, Vice Chair; Carl Dickens; Michael Witherspoon; Benita Watford Raleigh (6:13 p.m.); Steven Mednick, Counsel to the Commission

OTHERS: Gregory Burnett; Barbara Smyth; Edwin Camacho; Nora Niedzielski Eichner; David Heuvelman (6:09 p.m.) Common Council Sub Committee members

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Brescia called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Brescia called the Roll as indicated above. She recognized the Common Council members present. Mr. Burnett explained that a sub committee of Common Council members was formed.

The sub committee members are Ms. Niedzielski Eichner; Mr. Heuvelman; Ms. Smyth; Ms. McMurrer; Mr. Camacho and Mr. Burnett.

Ms. Brescia welcomed the sub committee members to the meeting.

III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Regular Meeting: May 24, 2023

The following correction was made to page 3: He suggested if the Commission is going to bump it out that they take it out of the charter and perhaps add a recommendation for when the Charter Commission revisits this next time.

** MR. MCQUAID MOVED TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Special Meeting: June 1, 2023

** MR. MCQUAID MOVED TO TABLE THIS ITEM FOR CLARIFICATION ON
PAGE TWO REGARDING THE LIBRARY
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no members of the public present this evening who wished to comment.

V. CONFER WITH THE PRESIDENT AND COMMON COUNCIL REGARDING “RESOLUTION OF THE NORWALK COMMON COUNCIL PERTAINING TO RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION PURSUANT TO C.G.S. §7-191(B) (“COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS”)

Attorney Mednick explained that the Resolution is very detailed and is a result of input from all of the meetings.

Mr. Heuvelman joined the meeting t 8:09 p.m.

VI. COMMENCE REVIEW AND DELIBERATE ON THE COUNCIL RECOMMENDATIONS

Attorney Mednick introduced Mr. Burnett who talked about the function of the Common Council and the substantive issues that needed to be addressed.

Mr. Burnett explained that what was before everyone is a result of the work of both entities. He described the changes that were made to the Charter to make it more readable and user friendly. He added that there are notations as to the specific Common Council member who submitted their specific changes.

Mr. Burnett reviewed Item 22 – specifically the section on the term of office. He said it was recommended that they extend the term of Mayor from two to four years; however, they are going to postpone including that on the November ballot. This matter will be undertaken on the next set of discussions of the Charter Revision Commission.

Ms. Watford Raleigh joined the meeting at 6:13 p.m.

Ms. Brechia asked for suggestions.

Mr. Burnett said that Attorney Mednick did an outstanding job of capturing the specific changes that both the Charter Revision Commission and the Common Council would like to see going forward. He said there are several items under 21 where the Common Council will do further work related to voter standards.

Mr. Burnett explained that the work of the Sub Committee of the Common Council is to clarify these items and come up with a consensus.

Attorney Mednick stressed the importance of remaining in communication with the Common Council. It is up to the Common Council to make sure they have a majority vote in August. He noted that if they are going to have a unitary system of elections, they need to align with the Board of Education. Attorney Mednick reiterated the importance of maintaining solid communication with the Common Council to minimize any problems. He said the Common Council has the right to disapprove things, but they do not have the right to amend anything.

VII. DISCUSSION OF THE REMAINING STEPS IN THE PROCESS AND THE SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS TO PREPARE THE FINAL REPORT

The Town Clerk should be authorized to prepare an explanatory text explaining what is in the Charter. Attorney Mednick reviewed the upcoming schedule and said the Common Council will act on August 15, 2023; the Charter Revision Commission has to file by early August. Additional meetings will need to be scheduled between now and then.

The Charter Revision Commission will walk through the document at their next meeting where they will have an opportunity to discuss four year terms.

Mr. Heuvelman asked if they are looking at a single Resolution for this Charter Revision since they are looking at taking out the four year terms. Attorney Mednick said the recommendation is a single Resolution. He said that the leadership of the Common Council will have to decide the key theme. His recommendation is to have one question that is clear and concise.

Ms. Brescia said she contacted all of the Taxing Districts to meet with them at their monthly meetings in September and answer any questions or concerns they may have. She said it is important to talk to as many people as possible. She added that they need to think about how to make that happen.

Attorney Mednick said that once the Commission sends the report to the Common Council the Commission goes out of business. He said they need to think about putting together a political action committee (PAC) to raise money to purchase lawn signs. He also recommended creating op eds to keep the Charter in the public's eye. He added that Mr. McQuaid's office has the statutory responsibility of creating the explanatory text. He noted that it can be published on the website. Mr. McQuaid said he looked forward to working with Attorney Mednick on the explanatory text and getting the word out.

Mr. Camacho suggested enlisting the help of different organizations such as the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Heuvelman asked when they could create the PAC. Attorney Mednick said it could be created at any time. He suggested reaching out to all political parties in town. He said they need to make sure all local media is contacted to help get the word out.

Mr. Dickens asked if they could use PAC money to go out into the community and sponsor neighborhood events to get the word out.

Ms. Watford Raleigh said that palm cards work well.

Mr. McQuaid said that from all the input he received they are going to have an easier time getting the Charter Revision voted on without the four year term.

Mr. Heuvelman said he likes the idea of bringing like minded people together from both sides of the aisle. He commended everyone on the Charter Revision Commission for the work they did, guided by Attorney Mednick.

Mr. Dickens thanked the Common Council member who have been at almost every meeting and expressed disappointment with the others.

Attorney Mednick said this is an outstanding group of people and is one of the best. He added that the members of the Common Council have been very supportive.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. MCQUAID MOVED TO ADJOURN
** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rosemarie Lombardi
Telesco Secretarial Services