

## **MINUTES - Amesbury Charter Review Commission (ACRC)**

Thursday, June 25, 2020, 7:00pm, Virtual Meeting (via GTM and ACTV)

### **COMMISSIONERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Rob Chamberlain

Kate Currie

Peter Frey

Bonnijo Kitchin

Christian Scorzoni

Jonathan Sherwood

Nick Wheeler

### **OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE**

Paul Fahey, Chief of Staff, Office of the Mayor (Staff Liaison)

**CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL** Vice Chair Jonathan Sherwood called the meeting to order at 7:02pm. All Commissioners were present.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES** Chair Nick Wheeler asked for approval of the minutes from the June 3, 2020 meeting. Jonathan Sherwood moved for approval, seconded by Christian Scorzoni. Unanimous vote.

**REVIEW OF COLLINS CENTER REPORT** The Commission received draft and final versions of the Collins Center memo; both are the same with one minor correction about mayoral terms. Paul Fahey said that he had spoken with Chair Nick Wheeler about placing documents on the City website, and suggested that he be charged by the Commission with posting them. He also provided an overview of the report.

Jonathan Sherwood proposed that the Commission start with a review of the technical issues identified and then move to policy discussions; he suggested that the Commission may want to focus initially on the simple technical changes and then move on to larger issues. Rob Chamberlain agreed with this approach and wishes to focus early on issues requiring some degree of clarity.

Chair Nick Wheeler wants to verify that the memo addresses all technical issues before voting occurs; he prepared a document with his own issues and will check it against the Collins Center memo. Paul Fahey proposed that the Commission charge the Chair with preparing a report of proposed technical changes for Commission consideration. In this way, the discussion can remain informal until action is required.

Peter Frey asked if there is an editable version of the Charter in which to make red-line edits as the Commission moves forward. Paul Fahey will have this and a separate document of changes as approved.

Motion to request a Chair's Report made by Jonathan Sherwood, seconded by Bonnijo Kitchin. Unanimous vote.

## **DISCUSSION OF COMMISSION REVIEW OF CHARTER AND OTHER DOCUMENTS**

Chair Nick Wheeler asked the Commission members if they have technical/policy issues to discuss.

Jonathan Sherwood -- Petition process 8-2, 8-3, 8-4, filling of vacancies, appointed committees – residency requirements, move from elected to appointed boards

Nick Wheeler -- Petition process 8-1, 8-2, 8-5, 8-6, residency requirements for boards, City employees not serving on boards

Peter Frey asked about status of board and commission vacancies. Paul Fahey stated that there is renewed interest given the Mayor's efforts to publicize vacancies and that many are being filled.

Christian Scorzoni – 2-5, 2-7b, petitions. He proposes caution on major policy changes, not his priority.

Rob Chamberlain – clarity on operating budget process, Mayor as SC Chair, mayoral terms

Christian Scorzoni – financial planning, Sec 5

Peter Frey suggests we compile items for Collins Center for research and asked if this fits the terms of their engagement. Chair Nick Wheeler also asked how we can best utilize them.

Paul Fahey noted that they are primarily responsible for the research memo and attendance at three (3) meetings, but that there is also a provision in the contract for them to do some research.

Motion for Chair to prepare list by Bonnijo Kitchin, seconded by Peter Frey. Unanimous vote.

Peter Frey – incorporate digital formats/website posting requirements

Nick Wheeler – references to bulletin boards

Christian Scorzoni – ensure timely communications between Mayor and Council

Kitchin – process for special meetings

Frey – T of C, etc.

Chamberlain – public access to documents

Scorzoni – “measures” 9-4

## REVIEW QUESTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

Chair Nick Wheeler has a draft e-mail to boards and commissions to solicit input over the next three weeks. Motion to send by Jonathan Sherwood, seconded by Christian Scorzoni. Unanimous vote.

Paul Fahey stated that similar feedback is being requested of department heads over the next 3 weeks. He is also working with KP Law on identifying instances where legal counsel was required to interpret the Charter over the past decade, as well as having an intern review City Council minutes on this issue. He also noted that Commissioners Chamberlain, Currie, and Wheeler need to submit oaths of office.

## DISCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS

Paul Fahey will invite Collins Center staff to the next Commission meeting for the first 60-90 minutes.

## PUBLIC COMMENT

**Mel Webster** · 7:10 Public comment: one of the areas I believe requires a change is the language related to filling elected office vacancies. Hope that will be looked at.

**Steve Stanganelli** · 11:05 PUBLIC COMMENT - Steve Stanganelli, 12 Amidon Ave: Section 8-4 Required Voter Participation: This should be changed to clarify what it means by voters (i.e. all registered as of a particular date) and a higher threshold closer to 35%. It seems unfair to have such a low bar to encumber the community at large.

**Steve Stanganelli** · 23:21 PUBLIC COMMENT: Steve Stanganelli, 12 Amidon Ave.: I recommend that Part IV include a section for "compensation" for other boards and committees.

**Steve Stanganelli** · 26:10 PUBLIC COMMENT: Steve Stanganelli, 12 Amidon Ave: Section 8 - The Charter should address and allow, if possible, digital petitions to accommodate the availability of technology and allowing greater access for citizen petitions.

**Steve Stanganelli** · 34:45 PUBLIC COMMENT: Steve Stanganelli, 12 Amidon Ave.: Special elections should be prohibited if within 4 to 6 weeks of a regularly scheduled general or primary election.

**Steve Stanganelli** · 41:17 PUBLIC COMMENT: Steve Stanganelli, 12 Amidon Ave.: Finance Committee - I recommend that a new Board be created under Part IV or a new section for a Finance Committee that is comprised of At-Large City Councilors and six new members to be elected from the community or appointed by the Mayor (up to 3 members) and by the City Council (up to 3).

**Steve Stanganelli** · 1:05:51 PUBLIC COMMENT: Steve Stanganelli, 12 Amidon Ave.: Section 5-6 Public Access to Financial Documents: I recommend that this section be revised to also include reference to documents to be available in digital format and stored someplace accessible online (i.e. website).

**NEXT MEETING DATE** Wednesday, July 8<sup>th</sup> at 7pm via GoToMeeting.

**ADJOURNMENT** Motion to adjourn by Peter Frey, seconded by Bonnijo Kitchin. Unanimous vote.  
Meeting adjourned at 8:27pm.

Minutes prepared by Paul Fahey, Staff Liaison

Respectfully submitted by Peter Frey, Secretary, Amesbury Charter Review Commission