

*Robert J. Bask*

TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS  
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
PUBLIC HEARING/WORKSHOP

2021 DEC -7 AM 11:29

TOWN CLERK  
EAST HARTFORD

NOVEMBER 9, 2021

PRESENT Deb Arrieta, Richard Bates, Don Bell, Shelby Brown, Marcia Leclerc,  
Tom Rup, Angel Santiago, Travis Simpson and Eric Thompson

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Bell called the workshop to order at 6:00p.m. He indicated that the first part of this meeting is a public hearing and the second part is a workshop.

Introductory Remarks by Chair Don Bell and Overview of the Process

Chair Bell summarized what the Commission has addressed through the ten meetings that have been called by this Commission. He summarized the topics that the Commission has been tasked with. Those topics are: (1) whether the town should have a professional person in charge of overseeing all town government operations; (2) whether the town charter should continue to list all town departments or provide some flexibility to consolidate or transfer functions of town departments without a charter revision; (3) whether the town directors should serve at the pleasure of the mayor or have some job security protections; (4) removal of budget by referendum; (5) term of office for mayor – 2 or 4 years; (6) simplifying town elections; (7) staggering terms for the town council; and (8) personnel appeals board: clarify powers.

Introductory Remarks by Members of the Commission on Items Under Consideration

Commissioner Travis Simpson spoke to the Town Manager form of government

OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO SPEAK

Harry Amadasun, Jr., 31 High Street, asked if residents could reach the Commission through email.

Tia Woods, 4 Simmons Road, suggested that Councillors state their names before they speak. Also, she asked what form of government the towns surrounding East Hartford have.

Joel Murchison, 230 Timber Trail, believes that a table/chart should be created which would compare the forms of government in the towns that surround East Hartford and that this table/chart should be available to East Hartford residents.

Adam Gagnon, 35 Overbrook Drive, would like to discuss the pros and cons of the different forms of government.

Don Currey, 14 Martin Circle, reminded the Commission that public hearings are a time for the Commission to listen to the input of the town's residents, not for residents to listen to the Commission. He also thought that having three Councillors on the Commission could be an ethical issue.

Henry Pawlowski, 48 Oxford Drive, agrees with the last speaker regarding the number of Councillors on the Commission. He also believes that having a strong Mayor form of government with a 2-year term is important.

Rachel Botts, 131 Jessica Drive, would like more information posted to the town's website.

Nathan Sanzo, 23 Risley Street, asked how often the Chief Operating Officer is appointed and the means by which that individual could be removed from their position if not performing per expectations.

Melody Currey, 14 Martin Circle, former Mayor of East Hartford gave the Commission several suggestions regarding the form of government. Her thoughts are posted to the Charter Revision Commission's homepage under "Citizens Comments".

Tony Le, 53 Elida Court, believes that in group participation.

Brittany Cavalieri, 440 Brewer Street, thanked the Commissioners for their hard work and dedication on this important task of reviewing the Town Charter. Ms. Cavalieri supports a strong Mayor form of government with a Chief Operating Officer option. She also thinks there should be more flexibility with the consolidation of the town's departments.

Dorese Roberts, 1454 Silver Lane, supports a strong Mayor form of government and a 4-year term for the Mayor.

Sebrina Wilson, 31 High Street, strongly supports extending the Mayor and Council terms to 4 years. She also believes that staggered terms should be considered and that a Chief Operating Officer would be extremely helpful to free up the Mayor's time to concentrate on forming strong relationships with residents and the business community.

Rich Kehoe, 8 Knollwood Road, explained that the makeup of the Charter Revision Commission was determined by the Town Council who appointed the members. He stated that the Council looked for a diversity of individuals on all levels, but especially those who have served in the private sector.

Mr. Kehoe stated that he is in favor of a strong Mayor form of government. He cited that 21 out of 25 of the largest towns in Connecticut have a strong Mayor leading that town. Mr. Kehoe is also not in favor of staggered terms for elected officials.

Chair Bell announced that both Raymond Johnson and Sid Soderholm wrote letters to the Commission sharing their ideas for revisions to the Charter. Mr. Johnson indicated that he is in favor of a Town Manager form of government. Mr. Soderholm wrote that he would like the Charter revised to eliminate the need for the Town Treasurer to counter-

sign all Town checks and to put in place provisions to ensure for independent internal audits.

This public hearing was adjourned at 7:18pm.

The workshop was called to order at 7:32 pm.

The Commissioners discussed several issues and asked questions of Assistant Corporation Counsel Rich Gentile.

#### ADJOURNMENT

The Commission **adjourned** at 8:58 p.m.