



## Charter Commission

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Watertown, MA 02472  
Phone: 617-972-6470

### Commissioners:

Mark S. Sideris,  
Chair

Stephen P. Corbett  
Michael Donham  
John A. Donohue  
Dennis J. Duff  
Susan G. Falkoff  
Anthony Palomba  
Rhiana Kohl  
Angeline B. Kounelis  
John J. Lawn, Jr.  
Cecilia Lenk  
Pamela Piantedosi  
Vincent J. Piccirilli, Jr.  
David Siegel  
Athelia Tilson

## **ADOPTED DRAFT MINUTES** **CHARTER COMMISSION MEETING** **TUESDAY, APRIL 20, 2010 7:00 PM** **RICHARD E. MASTRANGELO CHAMBER** **ADMINISTRATION BUILDING**

- 1. ROLL CALL:** The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Present for the meeting were Charter Commissioners: Michael Donham, Dennis J. Duff, Susan G. Falkoff, Rhiana Kohl, Angeline B. Kounelis, Cecilia Lenk, Vincent J. Piccirilli Jr., David Siegel, Athelia Tilson, Anthony Palomba, Stephen P. Corbett, and Mark Sideris, Chair. Commissioners Donohue and Lawn were absent. Commissioner Piantedosi arrived after the call of the roll. Also present was Valerie Papas, Clerk.
- 2. ADOPTION OF MINUTES:** [April 6<sup>th</sup>](#). Commissioner Duff moved the minutes as amended by correcting meeting date, seconded by Commissioner Tilson and adopted by voice vote.
- 3. MATTERS OF BUSINESS:**
  - a) Discussion and vote on dissemination of a revised [one-page informational flyer](#) and an out-reach program. Councilor Palomba stated that he has revised the one-page flyer. The one page flyer incorporated revisions from ~~Commissioners~~ [Commissioners](#) Tilson, Piantedosi and Falkoff. It was noted that Councilor Falkoff had additional revisions -not yet incorporated into this 2<sup>nd</sup> revised document as read aloud by Commissioner Palomba. Commissioner Kounelis indicated that she has not had a chance to read the revisions. Commissioner Piccirilli provided several suggestions for the one-page flyer as well.

Commissioner Palomba moved that after a 3<sup>rd</sup> round of revisions that the Commission allow the Chair to have final determination and approval on the language while working with Commissioner Kohl on the graphics, seconded by Commissioner Duff. Commissioner Siegel offered a friendly amendment that once the document is approved by

the Chair, it is posted on the website and on the bulletin board with the Town Clerk. The Chair added that the flyer will be sent to as many locations as possible. Adopted by voice vote, as amended.

The Chair stated that any further comments on the flyer shall be forwarded to the Clerk who will forward them to Commissioner Kohl. [\[Palomba?\]](#)

Councilor Lenk indicated that at the April 8<sup>th</sup> Technology meeting discussion took place regarding a Charter Commission webpage for all its documents, etc. Commissioner Falkoff moved to name the home page “Charter Review”, seconded by Commissioner Duff and adopted by voice vote. [www.watertown-ma.gov/charterreweiv](http://www.watertown-ma.gov/charterreweiv) with the contact person as the Council Clerk.

b)b) Informational Presentation by Attorney Brian Riley, Kopelman & Paige regarding the duties and charge of the Charter Commission as it relates to Chapter 43B. The Chair indicated that he invited Attorney Riley here tonight to discussion what the Commission’s role is here and what the body can and cannot do going forward. Attorney Riley stated that with respect to Chapter 43B, this Commission can make ~~wholesale-major~~ changes only by requesting a Special Act of the General Court or (also known as a Home Rule Petition) or make simple amendments by using the amendment process.

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Small amendments to the Charter can be proposed by the Commission, voted by 2/3 of the Council and placed on a ballot to be decided by the people. [indent – as the other paragraphs]

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Major changes to the Charter ~~including are defined as changes that change the~~ composition, ~~or~~ mode of election, appointment process or terms of office ~~to of~~ the Town Council or Town Manager. Manager can be done by Special Act or Home Rule. The changes would be made by discussing discussed initially by the Charter Review Commission, presented ~~by to~~ the Town Council ~~as a bill and voted~~ with a 2/3-~~affirmative vote~~ majority; sent to the General Court and, if approved, then signed by the Governor. The ~~bill would then be placed on the~~ General Court could decide whether the changes are effective as soon as the bill is signed or if they need to be placed on the ballot in a regular or special election. A binding question cannot be placed on the ballot ~~without before~~ the statutory process is completed although a non-binding question can be put before the voters at any point.

Commissioner Palomba stated that Home Rule Petitions and Special Acts are not unusual, ~~for a town to undertake as the town has~~ Watertown has undertaken several ~~including and one concerning the terms of lease to the Boys and Girls’ Club is one~~ presently in the General Court. Attorney Riley concurred. Commissioner Piccirilli

indicated that the town has used the Special Act for prior charter changes. The Chair stated that basically what he is hearing from Attorney Riley is that everything is on the Table and that ~~depending on what the changes are,~~ there is a process that allows this Commission to make changes whether they are major or minor. to be followed.

~~On a matter regarding~~ Regarding the Commission's deadline, Commissioner Palomba stated that ~~the Commission we~~ should not feel pressured to get something done by November 2010 in order to ~~e-~~ make the end of year ~~file~~ deadline that our current Charter requires for the Charter Review Commission to file a report. Attorney Riley ~~stated concurred~~ that a simple vote to extend that deadline is all that is needed. The Chair stated that the Commission can file a report by end of year indicating that their work has not been completed.

c) Upon a request from Commissioner Palomba, the Chair returned to previous discussion regarding the one-page flyer and ~~an out-reach-outreach~~ program. Councilor Palomba moved to authorize Commissioner Kohl to develop ~~up to a~~ a one or 2--sided one-page colored flyer to be given to the Chair for final approval, seconded by Commissioner Donham and adopted by voice vote. The Chair would then submit this flyer to the Manager with a request for funding. Commissioner Falkoff suggested the Chair look at the Council's budget for possible funding.

The Chair recognized resident Pat Gold, Duff Street who stated that the flyer should be to the point and simple.

As part of our outreach, Commissioner Palomba moved to authorize the Chair to ~~issue a one paragraph invitation~~ write to a list of organizations and civic groups about our work and inviting encourage them to invite Commissioners to speak on the matter ~~as part of an out-reach program,~~ seconded by Commissioner Duff and adopted by voice vote.

Regarding moving forward with future meetings on the Charter, Commissioner Palomba suggested that the Chair place on each agenda certain sections of the Charter so that interested residents can choose which meeting to attend as it relates to their particular interest. ~~This- He noted this would encourage will allow for~~ greater public participation. Commissioner Palomba noted.

The Chair stated that he will try to pinpoint certain sections for discussion a month in advance.

Commissioner Siegel indicated that there are 9 articles in the Charter of which only 6 ~~of those~~ articles ~~would be likely to~~ generate ~~the most interest and significant~~ discussion. He asked that each month the Chair place ~~an one of those six~~ articles on the agenda for discussion-  
~~in advance.~~

The Chair stated that he would reserve certain articles for discussion prior to and after the summer months to ensure that residents are in town and have received adequate notice.

The Chair noted that the next meeting on May 4<sup>th</sup> will host an expert from the Massachusetts Municipal Association to speak on forms of government.

The Chair reminded Commissioners that any additional revisions to the one-page flyer should be forwarded to the Clerk by Friday.

**4. ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business to come before the Commission, Commissioner Donham moved to adjourn at 8:40 pm, seconded by Commissioner Duff and adopted by unanimous vote.

For a complete transcript of the meeting, a DVD is available upon request.