

Harvard Charter Commission
Meeting Minutes
April 25, 2017
Hildreth House Dining Room

Members present: Paul Cohen (Chair), Rick Maiore, George McKenna, Stephanie Opalka, Charles Redinger, Peter Warren. Members absent: Sharon McCarthy, Ron Ostberg, Cindy Russo.

Paul called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Public Comment

Connie Larrabee asked the commissioners to consider a centralized, comprehensive person or department that would give guidance to committees that come forward with a building project before a building committee is assigned. She shared as an example her experience with the Hildreth House Improvement Committee when she received conflicting information from different committees and even different people on the same committee.

In the discussion that followed, a number of observations were made:

- There needs to be a central repository where someone can go to find out the process.
- There needs to be a roadmap that shows the process before a building committee is assigned.
- A meeting with the committee chairs to review the project could help eliminate conflicting information. Committees likely to be involved – Historic Commission, Capital Planning and Investment, Finance, Community Preservation Fund, Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission.
- This raises the same point the commission has pursued: How do you take the Master Plan and bring it into action by the town?
- The Master and Capital plans would help establish priorities when projects conflict.
- How much the project will cost and where the funding comes from are major questions for any project.
- Coordinated discussion and plan would work for public and private building projects, as well as building maintenance.
- The solution to this problem may be outside the scope of the charter. It might be better dealt with in bylaws.

The topic will be added to the list of open items that need to be addressed.

Discussion of the school project illustrating the current process followed.

The commission approved the March 30 minutes as amended.

Communication

Paul reviewed the meeting schedule:

Tuesday, May 2, 7 p.m. – meeting with the Planning Board and School Committee

Saturday, May 6, 9 a.m. – public hearing

Thursday, May 11, 7 p.m. – public hearing

Tuesday, May 23, 7 p.m. – meeting with the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, and Capital Planning and Investment Committee

Thursday, May 25, 7 p.m. – regular meeting

Stephanie will announce the May 6 public hearing on Next Door Harvard and in the Parent Teacher Organization news flash, with a link to the draft charter, and send a notice to the *Harvard Press*. Charles will put up a folding board announcement on the Common.

George questioned whether the commission is building the partnerships with the boards needed to support the charter at Town Meeting. If board members strongly oppose some of the changes, he said, the commission should consider changing direction. The premise of the charter is a unified vision for everyone.

Rick said that at the hearings they need to revisit why the commission is recommending the changes, keep it simple, and keep going back to the reason of what the commission is doing. Put up the model and get some feedback.

The point expressed by several members is that attendees will be encouraged to give their ideas of what will fix the problems identified by the commission if they don't agree with the recommendations.

Charles suggested a brief overview of what they have done. Stephanie suggested that they present a short list of topics to start the discussion. Commissioners discussed preliminary topics:

- Vision
 - Accountability to the Master Plan
 - Who funds the vision
- Conflicting jurisdictions
 - Accountability/Responsibility
 - Building Inspector/Facilities Manager
 - Park and Recreation
- Central community development group
 - Planner, planning board, land use boards, conservation commission, etc.
 - Services provided by this group
- Mechanics
 - Elected and appointed boards
 - Term length
 - Coterminous or staggered terms

Peter will bring 30 copies of the draft charter to the hearing. He will also scan the organization chart and print 30 copies to the hearing.

Send copies of any sign-in sheets from earlier hearings to Stephanie, she'll merge and redistribute them so commissioners can contact people to attend.

There was a brief discussion of the School Committee's letter (see attached), mostly about the facilities manager, the role of that position, and funding. Charles said he see the focus of the letter is on keeping three-year terms, which is supported by data.

Next meeting is May 2, 7 p.m., in the Hildreth House dining room.

Paul adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Laura Andrews, Recorder