

Harvard Charter Commission
Meeting Minutes
November 15, 2017
Upper Town Hall

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

Paul Cohen called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m. There was no public comment.

Attending commissioners approved the minutes from 10/5 and 10/11.

Paul said that the Charter Commission is a valid commission until after town election, which will take place in May. Several people pointed out that it would be best to start outreach sooner rather than later to reach the most people before the election.

Next Steps

Commissioners discussed strategies for educating residents about the Charter:

- Identify the organizations in town to visit.
 - Stephanie Opalka handed out a partial list for people to review and add to it.
 - Sharon McCarthy said that the League of Women's Voters would hold an educational forum.
- Hold several rounds of discussions.
 - General information first, like the statement of intent, then
 - More specific information later.
 - Ask people where they stand on the Charter.
- Point out examples of how the process is working as different groups are currently implementing some of the recommendations, for example, the Board of Selectmen.
- Identify key people to work with who can help educate others who may not read the newspaper or use Next Door Harvard.
- Develop a simple graphic that explains how the process would work under a Charter.
 - Ron Ostberg said the town needs to add two essential elements to succeed:
 - More expertise, and
 - A better management structure.
 - Rick Maiore said the message needs to be simple – there is no leadership.
 - The business district is a mess.
 - We're using zoning that was developed in the 1950s.
 - Sharon said it would good to talk about how the town will deal with bigger issues.
 - Devens, and
 - Systemic budget deficits.

- Stephanie recommended that, over the next month, commissioners each:
 - Identify three points to go out to residents with, and
 - Come up with a five-word catch phrase.
- Identify the methods of communication.
 - Social media – Sharon will talk to several people about social media,
 - Cable Access,
 - Regular mail,
 - The newspaper – Rick will talk to Worth Robbins at the *Press*.

The next meeting will be in the second or third week of January, specifics to follow.

Paul adjourned the meeting at 5:45 p.m.

Laura Andrews, Recorder