

Harvard Charter Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 10, 2018
Upper Town Hall

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

Paul Cohen called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. There was no public comment.

Commissioners approved the minutes of the 11/15/17 and 10/6/16 meetings and the 2017 Annual Town Report that Paul drafted.

Discussion followed about ways to educate town residents about the Charter before the May 8 Town Election. The Board of Selectmen is required to mail the Charter to every voter two weeks before the election. George McKenna pointed out that some residents think the vote will be at Annual Town Meeting May 5, so that confusion needs to be cleared up.

Education Points:

- The Charter is the document that allows the town to define and achieve goals.
- It provides a structure for the BOS.
- It gives the Board of Selectman more strength rather than more power.
- What happens if the Charter passes; if it doesn't?
- It can be revised.

Outreach Ideas:

- Have a table at Town Meeting.
- Host coffees at the General Store.
- Create “affinity groups” – invite 10 people somewhere and hold discussions around a table.
- Present at various town venues:
 - Transfer station,
 - Wednesday men’s coffee,
 - Garden Club,
 - Other town groups. Stephanie Opalka will send around again the list she made of town organizations.
- Conduct a town-wide survey.
- Draw up a document that explains what the Charter does and then divide up the town.
- Mail a card to all residents with the website address to review Charter information.
- Timing is important so voters are aware of the Charter close to the election.

Rick Maiore said that most newer, younger residents do not use the transfer station and may not be involved in these organizations. Stephanie said the vote on a new elementary school would bring out many young residents. Discussion followed about whether there is a tie-in between the Charter and the school building project.

Next Steps:

- Review articles about the Charter in the Press.
- Review questions from the public hearings.
- Compile a list of frequently asked questions (FAQs) with answers.

Each commissioner was asked to send 20 questions, without answers, to Stephanie by 1/17. She, Sharon McCarthy, and Charles Redinger will compile a list of FAQs and send it to the commissioners by 1/19 for discussion at the next meeting.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, January 31, at 5 p.m. in the Volunteers Conference Room, Town Hall.

Paul adjourned the meeting at 6:06 p.m.

Laura Andrews, Recorder