

Harvard Charter Commission
Meeting Minutes
January 31, 2018
Upper Town Hall, Volunteers' Meeting Room

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

Paul Cohen called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m. There was no public comment.

Commissioners approved the minutes of the 1/10/18 meetings.

Discussion continued about some of the ways to inform voters about what the Charter is and what it will do. Some of the ideas were:

- Hold information meetings that go through the Charter section by section and explain each section and the reasoning behind it.
- Use the local cable channel to broadcast a presentation or a live discussion.
- If the League of Women Voters holds a forum, attend to answer questions
- Contact known supporters to write letters to the editor of the *Press*.
- Run "Consider This" articles in the *Press*.
- Run a thought piece in the *Press* that explains that the commissioners listened to volunteers on boards and committees and made independent observations of needed changes.
- Create a website where people can click on a question to see the answer, or pose their own questions.

Stephanie Opalka suggested that the commission map out what needs to be done month to month before the election.

In February, the frequently asked questions (FAQs) with answers document needs to be finalized and given to Town Administrator Tim Bragan to go in the warrant article booklet mailing along with a copy of the Charter. Rick Maiore said there are two pages available. Cindy Russo said that some biographical information about commission members' experience on town boards should be included. Discussion followed about optimum formatting to make the information readable.

Although the commission cannot advocate for the Charter, several commissioners suggested people who could:

- Rick Maiore pointed out that the people who initiated and signed the citizens' petition to form the Charter Commission are the logical supporters to lobby for the Charter.
- Peter Warren suggested volunteers on boards who would be appointed under a Charter.
- Ron Ostberg recommended members of the Board of Selectmen who support the Charter.

Commissioners reviewed the draft FAQ document Stephanie circulated and made suggestions about language and formatting, including numbering the questions.

Next Steps:

- Stephanie will send an updated draft of FAQs.
- Each commissioner will write answers to the questions and send them to Stephanie by February 7.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, February 14, at 4 p.m. in the Volunteers Conference Room, Town Hall.

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

Laura Andrews, Recorder