

**Essex Charter Review Committee Meeting Minutes
(Draft)**

**Town of Essex Charter Review Committee
Draft Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday September 20, 2022**

Charter Review Committee: Lauren Layman, Charles Tabone, Alexis Dubief, Bruce Post, Margaret Smith.

Administration and Staff: Greg Duggan – Town Manager, Dawn Hill-Fleury – Ex Officio (Essex Selectboard Member).

Others Present: None.

1. Call to Order

Greg Duggan called the Essex Charter Review Committee to order at 5:35 PM.

2. Agenda Additions/Changes

None.

3. Approve Agenda

No changes, thus no approval required.

4. Appointment of Chairperson and Minute taker

a. **Bruce Post made a motion, seconded by Margaret Smith to appoint Lauren Layman as Chairperson. Motion passed 5-0.**

b. **Bruce Post made a motion, seconded by Alexis Dubief to appoint Charles Tabone as Minute taker. Motion passed 5-0.**

5. Discuss existing Essex Town Charter

a. **Community Outreach.** The committee discussed different ways to have community input in the Charter Review process. Ms. Dubief suggested that at certain points in the process we compile a summary document to share. Ms. Layman suggested we have an advertised Testimony Day.

b. **Charter Drafting.** There was discussion by all members to have access to Bill Ellis to assist with proper wording once we have a working draft.

c. **Charter Review.** Mr. Duggan suggested that we first go through the entire current Charter; make updates as needed and then move on to other Charter related business.

d. **Charter Values.** Ms. Dubief brought up that the Charter is lacking in Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility and this is something we should consider. Ms. Layman suggested that we want to incorporate these values in to the Charter and not processes.

6. Proposed Recommendations for changes to existing Essex Town Charter

a. Essex Charter Subchapter 1: Powers of the Town

- i. §117-101 Mr. Post asked if Annexation is still necessary or relevant. Does it only apply to villages. Refer to Mr. Ellis.

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- ii. §117-102 Reviewed. No changes at this time.
- iii. §117-103 (a) Reviewed. No changes at this time.
- iv. §117-103 (b) Reviewed. No changes at this time.
- v. §117-103 (c) Ms. Dubief suggested we add the word Commissions to the first sentence so that the language matches §117-209 (b) (1) and §117-207.
- vi. §117-103 (d) Reviewed. No changes at this time.
- vii. §117-105 (a) Why is there a Grand Juror in there? We need to reword this section if appropriate to do so and verify with Mr. Ellis. Committee agreed.
- viii. §117-106 Committee, is there a way to simplify the process of first, second reading; public hearing?
- ix. §117-106 (a) The committee agreed that we would like to address the issue surrounding newspaper of record for public notices so that all residents can continue to properly receive them in the most efficient manner.
- x. §117-106 (b) Committee, consider language that empowers the board to manage meetings. Look into state law, open meeting law, about public comment
- xi. §117-106 (c) Committee, consider using same language from section (b) above
- xii. §117-107 Committee, replace “passage” with “final passage”.
- xiii. §117-108 Committee, add language that reflects that ordinances are also being kept up to date on the Essex Town website.
- xiv. §117-109 Committee, change “legal voters” to “registered voters”. Consider changing “shall distribute” to “make available”.
- xv. §117-110 Reviewed. No changes at this time.

b. Proposed Changes: Committee Recommendations by Member (this is not a complete list)

- i. §117-203 (c) Ms. Hill-Fleury suggests adding “until next annual meeting”.
- ii. §117-206 (a) Ms. Hill-Fleury suggests adding all committees by name.
- iii. §117-206 (a) (1) Ms. Hill Fleury suggests changing to a DRV.
- iv. §117-206 (b) Ms. Hill Fleury language to describe when and how a Commissions ends.
- v. §117-209 (b) (1) Ms. Layman suggests adding language that the Selectboard may also abolish/dissolve commissions.
- vi. §117-303 Ms. Hill-Fleury suggests we clarify “at Town meeting” since we are voting by ballot for the budget.
- vii. §117-302 (a) Ms. Hill-Fleury suggests changing “legal voters” to “registered voters” and changing 7:30 o’clock in the afternoon to 7:30 PM.
- viii. §117-503 Committee needs clarification on what this means. Refer to Mr. Ellis
- ix. §117-602 Committee, is Town Agent another term for Town Attorney?
- x. §117-701 Ms. Hill-Fleury suggests that we repeal this

7. Public Comment

- a. Brad Kennison (email) - Recall provision if included it should have a high hurdle to clear (e.g. signatures from 15+ percent of registered voters: 2/3 support to remove rather than a simple majority).
- b. Greg Duggan - Allow for dog licensing fees to be set by Town, not state. From South Burlington charter: § 13-104(7) to adopt and enforce ordinances for the purpose of regulating and licensing the following activities, or other activities which the city has the power to regulate or license by virtue of the law of this state or this charter, and

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to fix reasonable and necessary license fees therefore; places or public resort or public amusement whether indoor or outdoor; places dispensing food and drink to the public, such as restaurants, bars or inns; theaters; public dances; itinerant vendors; the exclusive occupancy of any specified portion of a public street or right-of-way; and the keeping of dogs or other pets.

8. Next Meeting

- a. The next scheduled meeting of the Essex Charter Review Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, September 27, 2022 at 5:30 PM at Town of Essex 1st Floor Conference Room.

9. Adjourn

- a. **Bruce Post made a motion seconded by Margaret Smith to close the meeting.**
Motion passed 5-0
- b. Meeting Adjourned 7:35 PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Charles Tabone
Minute taker