

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

Town of Essex Charter Review Committee
Draft Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday October 25, 2022

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

Administration and Staff: Tammy Getchell (Teams)

Others Present: On Teams – Lorraine Zaloom, Gina Halpin, Tanya Vyhovsky. At meeting – Mary Post, Betsy Dent

1. Call to Order

- a. Mr. Tabone called the Essex Charter Review Committee to order at 5:43 PM.

2. Agenda Additions/Changes

- a. None.

3. Approve Minutes

- a. Mr. Tabone made a motion seconded by Ms. Dubief to approve minutes: October 18, 2022. Motion passed 4-0, Mr. Post abstain

4. Public Comment

- a. Mary Post stated she would be in favor of representation from neighborhood area districts or wards and feels that the citizens would be better enabled and more involved and are currently not listened to.
- b. Lorraine Zaloom wanted to know if non-US citizens can be allowed to vote in Essex.
- c. Betsy Dent would like to see a study done on neighborhood districts prior to the next town meeting as we have a diverse town that could benefit from better representation.

5. Member Recommendations to Charter

- a. Neighborhood Assemblies
 - i. There is a concern that we do not have enough time to properly implement this as we would need the results of a study to gather more information.
 - ii. Perhaps we can create a list of non-Charter items to present to the Selectboard as things to consider.
 - iii. **Mr. Post made a motion seconded by Ms. Smith that we recommend to the Selectboard that they do a study on creating Voting Districts and Neighborhood Assemblies as a non-Charter item. Motion passed 5-0**
- b. Preamble for the Charter
 - i. We would like to write a Preamble to the Charter.
 - ii. Ms. Dubief has a document that might provide us with some insight as to how this might be worded.
- c. Recall Provision
 - i. There is a document from the National Civic League that has some good insight into this that might be helpful.

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- ii. We would like to provide a partial list of items that would be reasons for a Recall.
- iii. We would like to involve the BCA in this process.
- iv. The Colchester Charter has some good ideas we may be able to use.
- v. It was suggested that there might be a section for corrective actions.
- vi. **Mr. Post made a motion seconded by Mr. Tabone that we include a recall provision in the Charter. Motion passed 5-0.**
- d. Executive Sessions
 - i. It was discussed that minutes taken in an Executive Session are not public record.
 - ii. What issues would recording Executive Sessions bring about?
 - iii. Selectboard needs to follow 1 V.S.A. § 313.
 - iv. **Ms. Dubief made a motion seconded by Mr. Post that we add language to the Charter stating that Executive Sessions should follow Vermont State Law as well as verbiage to the effect of section 1, 2, and 3 of our Committee document on Executive Sessions and Transparency. Motion passed 5-0.**
- e. Licensing and Ordinances
 - i. We would like to provide the Town Manager with more authority to enforce ordinances for the purposes of regulating and licensing specific activities to be detailed.
 - ii. We would like to provide the ability for the Selectboard to work with the Town Manager in the creation of new ordinances and for the Selectboard to provide the Town Manager with the authority to enforce ordinances for the purposes of regulating and licensing specific activities to be detailed.
 - iii. **Mr. Tabone made a motion seconded by Ms. Dubief that we authorize the Selectboard to adopt ordinances and provide the Town Manager with the authority to enforce said ordinances and assess fees where required. Motion Passed 5-0.**
- f. DRB – Development Review Board
 - i. The Committee discussed replacing the current ZBA with a DRB model.
 - ii. It was thought that the town could accomplish this on or before July 1, 2024.
 - iii. **Ms. Smith made a motion seconded by Mr. Post that a DRB Development Review Board will replace the current ZBA Zoning Board of Appeals and Planning Commission on or before but no later than July 1, 2024. Motion passed 5-0.**
- g. Other Topics Discussed
 - i. It was discussed that we should consider giving the Selectboard the authority to institute a Local Option Tax.
 - ii. Just Cause Eviction.
 - iii. Public Service Commission.
 - iv. Renters Commission.
 - v. Elevating some Committees to Commission Status so they would have more authority to act and take some of the work off the Selectboard.

6. Next Meeting

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

7. Adjourn

- a. Mr. Post made a motion seconded by Mr. Tabone to close the meeting. Motion passed 5-0.
b. Meeting Adjourned 7:30 PM.

Respectfully Submitted,
Charles Tabone
Minute taker