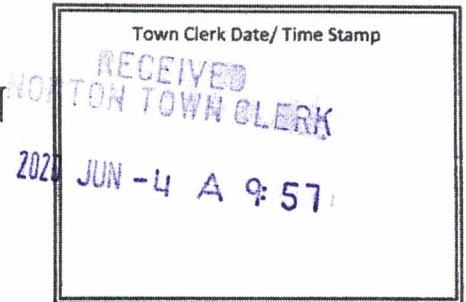




TOWN OF NORTON CHARTER COMMISSION

Monday, May 4, 2020
7:00 P.M.



Remote Participation Only (Public Welcome):

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86171584346?pwd=VFhldTc0NDZF6ZFFTNIjJmWEF5VmVaUT09>

Join via Phone(one tap mobile):

+19292056099,,86171584346#,,1#,701935#

Meeting ID: 861 7158 4346

~MINUTES~

1. Call to Order: Roll Call, Ask / Announce Recording, Pledge of Allegiance

The May 4, 2020 meeting of the Charter Commission was called to order at 7:05 PM, by Ms. Laura Parker, Chair.

Members Present: Ms. Janey Goodwin, Mr. Dave Heaney, Ms. Sandy Ollerhead, Mr. Keith Silver, Ms. Kerry Snyder, and Mr. David Wrenn.

Ms. Denise Luciano arrived at 7:13 PM.

Members absent: Mr. Kevin Schleicher

2. Acceptance of prior meeting minutes

Motion was made by Mr. Heaney to accept the minutes of April 20, 2020. Seconded by Mr. Silver. Vote: Ms. Goodwin - yes; Mr. Heaney - yes; Ms. Ollerhead - yes; Ms. Parker - yes; Mr. Silver - yes; Ms. Snyder - yes; Mr. Wrenn - yes. MOTION CARRIES.

3. Discussion of administrative items, if any

Meeting on May 19th will be moved back to May 18th.

Ms. Parker received a response from both the attorney general's office and the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). The attorney general's office referred Ms. Parker to Town Counsel and said there was nothing they could do. DHCD said this is a local issue and told Ms. Parker to talk to the Board of Selectmen about getting an extension. Senator Feeney also responded and said he might be able to get some relief from colleagues in the Senate who are working on municipal law related specifically to Covid-19. He also made Norton's two congressmen aware of the situation.

Lauren Goldberg reached out to Ms. Parker on Thursday to say that she will try to get to the draft over the next couple of days.

4. Public Comment – Open forum

No members of the public wished to speak.

5. Discussion and potential vote(s) of Charter elements:

a. Citizen Participation options

Ms. Parker compared the citizen participation measures from the charters of six towns with a Town Council form of government.

Free Petition:

Ms. Parker asked whether a free petition should include the school committee. Ms. Snyder suggested reaching out to the school committee to see how they feel about being included. Ms. Goodwin would also like to get feedback from the school committee. Ms. Parker will reach out to members of the school committee to get their thoughts.

Ms. Parker asked what others felt was an appropriate number of signatures would be required get a measure heard through a public hearing. The range on the six towns that she compared was between 25 and 150. Mr. Heaney suggested 100 signatures given the population of Norton is smaller than those other towns. Ms. Snyder agreed and stated that there not be a strict prescribed form required. Ms. Parker asked whether there should be a limit on how often a subject can be brought up. After discussion, it was decided that this wasn't necessary.

Motion was made by Ms. Snyder to accept within our charter a citizen participation measure allowing free petition by a group brought forth by 100 voters on no particular format with no limitation as to how many times a subject can be brought up. Seconded by Mr. Heaney. Vote: Ms. Goodwin - yes; Mr. Heaney - yes; Ms. Luciano - yes; Ms. Ollerhead - yes; Ms. Parker - yes; Mr. Silver - yes; Ms. Snyder - yes; Mr. Wrenn - yes.
MOTION CARRIES

Initiative Petition:

It was agreed that the town council would have 30 days from approval by the town attorney to act on an initiative petition. If the town attorney deems the initiative petition lawful, town council may either (1) pass it without change, (2) pass a measure in lieu of the initiative (deemed rejected), (3) reject it, or (4) put it to a town vote. If no action is taken within 30 days, no town council business may be conducted until action is taken. There will be 250 signatures required for this first step in the process.

If the town council rejects the initiative, a supplemental petition may be submitted which will require signatures of 10% of the registered voters in order to put the initiative to a town vote. These can include the signatures of the original 250 petitioners but they must also sign the supplemental petition. The signatures need to be submitted within 45 days. In order for the measure to pass at a town election, 15% of the town's registered voters will be required to vote in the election; however, if the town council has called for the election, no minimum number of votes will be required.

Referendum:

A referendum will require signatures of 7.5% of the registered voters in order to be put to a town vote. The signatures need to be submitted within 21 days. In order for the measure to pass at a town election, 20% of the town's registered voters will be required to vote in the election.

6. Next Meeting: May 18, 2020 via Remote Participation only

7. Adjournment

Motion was made by Ms. Snyder to adjourn the Charter Commission meeting at 9:49 PM. Seconded by Mr. Heaney. Vote: Unanimous.

Minutes respectfully submitted by: Dandre M Ollerhead

Minutes approved by the Board or Committee on: 5/18/20

Chairman Signature: 