

**CITY OF NORWALK
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
MAY 20, 2025**

ATTENDANCE: Tyler Fairbairn, Chair; Jo Bennett, Atty. Ed Camacho,
Douglas Hempstead, John Levin, Rick McQuaid

Via Zoom: Carl Dickens, Vice Chair; Jim Clark, Tanya Rhodes-Small

OTHERS: Atty. Steve Mednick

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Fairbairn called the second public hearing Charter Revision meeting to order at 6:36 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Mr. Fairbairn called the roll. A quorum was present.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Ms. Lisa Henderson, of Apple Tree Lane thanked the Commission for holding the public hearing She said that as a non-Democrat she was under represented in Norwalk and disappointed that the Minority Party Representation requirement for the Five At Large Council Members was not moving forward. She added that she didn't think that there should be a 10 year gap for the next Charter Review since very little will be changing.

Mr. Peter Bondi, of Prince Pines Road, came forward and said he appreciated what the Commission was doing and that he was present as a Constable. He thanked the Commission for recognizing them as an asset to the City. He said that he had been a constable on and off for about 20 years. He listed a number of groups that he has provided assistance to during that time. He noted that his father, Fred Bondi, was also a constable. He thanked the Commission for recognizing them.

Mr. Richard McConnell came forward to speak about the Minority Party Representation and said that it was the grass roots issue. He said that Minority Representation breaks down barriers and helps Norwalk not be driven by political popularity. He asked that they seriously consider this and it may encourage people to come out and vote. He said that there were many people who felt disenfranchised. He said he had been following the meetings and thanked everyone for all the work the Commission has done.

Mr. Louis, a resident of Osborne Avenue came forward and said that he was present in support of Minority Party Representation. It is a crucial part of making sure everyone's voices are heard.

Minority Party Representation is very important to any municipality regardless of which party people belong to.

Mr. Chris Dwyer came forward and said he had just learned about the Charter. He said that the charge was to make the document more transparent. He pointed out that he works for Co-Pilot and the document is 200 pages long. He suggested that they use

Ms. Diane Lauricella, of Little Fox Lane, then spoke and thanked the Commission for their time and effort. She said that a lot of discussion but was disappointed that there were a number of ideas were put down with very little thought. She said that the definition of the Operating Budget needed more work and that the Council should have more line item control.

She also mentioned that they want to have more diversity on the Board of Estimate and Taxation and it should reflect the figures for the census tract. She felt that the City was not practicing what they preach. She said that fifteen was not enough to allow minorities candidates for election. She added that she would be approaching the State legislators about having a four year term for

Council Member Heather Dunn came forward and said that she was the sole minority representative for the City. She is representing slightly less than half the voters in Norwalk. She thanked everyone for stepping up but was sorry they were not addressing the minority Representation and apparently are fine with it remaining as it is for up to the next ten years. She would like to have it included with five at large seats on the Council.

Mr. Martin Tagliferro Lookout Road, Norwalk, said that he was present to support Minority Representation on the Council. He suggested adding one Minority Representation seat in each District and one At Large seat.

Council Member Niedzielski-Eicher came forward to acknowledge the work that the Commission has done and the ideas that were laid. She hoped that they had raised a number of issues for future conversations. She said that she supported Council having line item control and four year terms. She quoted James Madison about the power over the purse. She noted that this was why this rested with Congress and not the administration. She thanked them for the amount of time that has been invested in this document.

Mr. Erik Vitaglione of Van Zant Street, said that he was disappointed because there was a great deal that could have been done. He said that he was pleased that the referendum had passed and felt a five year turn around would be better than a ten year turn around. He felt there was not much to show for this process.

Mr. Fairbairn asked if there was anyone else on line who wished to address the Commission. Seeing none, he asked if there was anyone else in person who wished to address the Commission. When no one came forward, Mr. Fairbairn closed the public hearing at 6:58 p.m.

IV. DISCUSSION

A. Charter Revision Current Version 12.05 for Public Hearing
B. Charter Revision Current Version 12.05-04 for Public Hearing

Mr. Fairbairn asked if they had anything else to discuss. Atty. Mednick said that they had another meeting scheduled to discuss the comments made by the public.

**** ATTY. CAMACHO MOVED HAVE ATTY. MEDNICK'S NOTES ON THE COMMENTS AVAILABLE FOR THE NEXT MEETING.**

Atty. Mednick said that he would have that information available. Mr. Levin pointed out that the Commission could discuss the issues mentioned by the public at this meeting as well as the next meeting.

**** MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO BRING THE DISCUSSION REGARDING HAVING TWO OF THE AT LARGE SEATS DESIGNATED FOR MINORITY REPRESENTATION OFF THE TABLE.**

Mr. Hempstead noted that at the last meeting, he had made a motion to bring this discussion off the table but the vote was tied. Discussion followed.

Ms. Bennett said that there were six out of the ten speakers mentioned the Minority Representation. Atty. Mednick suggested that they put it on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Levin objected. Atty. Camacho said that the issue was whether the previous vote was final. Mr. Levin said that he had not been familiar with Mason's Rules. Mr. McQuaid said that they would have to look at the record of the vote. Discussion followed.

Mr. Fairbairn said that they would have to do some research. Mr. Levin said that he respected Atty. Camacho's concerns about continually reopening item. They have to see what the ruling was.

Mr. Fairbairn asked if there were any other comments from Commissioners on the most up to date summary and version of the Charter.

Atty. Mednick pointed out that this was a Public Hearing, and Atty. Camacho had requested a summary of the items. He explained that they would be able to discuss the items that have been brought up to the Commission.

Mr. Levin said that he had just looked up the Mason's Rules and untabling a previously tabled item is permitted.

Mr. Fairbairn said that they would do the research for the meeting on the 27th. He thanked everyone that came out for the Public Hearing.

ADJOURNMENT

**** MR. HEMPSTEAD MOVED TO ADJOURN.**

**** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:13 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S.L. Soltes

Telesco Secretarial Services