



June 28, 2016

CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS
City Charter Review Commission
Music Hall – 3rd Floor
7:00 PM

7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

SALUTE TO FLAG

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

NYCOM STAFF – WADE BELTRAMO

ESTABLISHMENT OF BYLAWS

NEW BUSINESS

- 1. IDENTIFICATION OF PEOPLE TO INTERVIEW**
- 2. OTHER**

MEETING SCHEDULE

ADJOURN



June 28, 2016

CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS
City Charter Review Commission
Music Hall – 3rd Floor
7:00 PM

PRESENT: Jeff Altamari
Ann Casey Bullock
Gordon Boyd
Laura Chodos
Elio DelSette
Matt Jones
Pat Kane
BK Keramati
Robert Kuczynski
Mike Los
Minita Sanghvi
Barbara Thomas
Robert Turner
Beth Wurtmann

STAFF: Tony Izzo

RECORDING OF PROCEEDING

The proceedings of this meeting were taped for the benefit of the secretary. Because the minutes are not a verbatim record of the proceedings, the minutes are not a word-for-word transcript.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Robert Turner called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

Robert Turned moved and Barbara Thomas seconded the approval of 6-14-16 meeting minutes.

Ayes – All

Tony Izzo, assistant city attorney read a letter from Mayor Yepsen into the record (copy of letter attached).

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chairman Turner introduced Wade Beltramo, general counsel for NYCOM.

NYCOM STAFF - WADE BELTRAMO

Mr. Beltramo provided the Commission with copies of his presentation (copy attached), a copy of each Charter from Syracuse and Oneonta (copies of both attached), and parts of the Handbook for Village Officials (copies attached). He explained NYCOM is a not for profit formed by cities to advocate on behalf of cities and villages. He handles all questions regarding Charter review. As members of this Commission, each member can receive free access to their members' only website. All the cities in the state operate by Charter. He recommended looking at the Village law but not to copy it - use it as a guide. You have to think about how this is going to be interpreted so keep it simple. It is impossible to create a document that has the answer to every question. You just need to make it detailed enough that it serves your purposes.

Gordon Boyd asked if Mr. Beltramo had any insight on the 2 tax districts in the City of Saratoga Springs.

Wade Beltramo stated they don't have the staff to dig into that.

Tony Izzo advised the City was a Village before it was a City back in 1888.

Wade Beltramo advised there are 4 forms of city government in New York – strong mayor, city manager, weak mayor, and commission form. The Charter determines the form of government. He explained the highlights of each form of government. Mechanicville is the other city that uses the commission form of government. What you are looking for in the Charter is power, process, and procedure.

Tony Izzo stated we have local laws and ordinances.

Wade explained a local law has the same force and effect of a state statute only applicable just in your jurisdiction. Ordinance is a type of local legislative enactment that has a certain procedure.

Tony Izzo stated the City's Charter defines local law and ordinance.

BK Keramati asked if you can have a successful charter with local laws and nothing else.

Wade stated it could be done. Hiring and firing of personnel is always an important issue. The state law is silent regarding removing a city official from office. It is important to detail power. There are some city councils that serve from wards. If a ward system is done you have to have districts. City councils generally act by majority vote of the full constituted board and can only conduct business when there is a **quorum** present – **50% plus 1** regardless of vacancies, absences, or abstentions. He warned that you must be aware of how much work you want each member to do.

Gordon Boyd asked about appointing vacancies.

Wade Beltramo stated that must be addressed in the charter. What are the terms (years) people are going to serve? As a general rule, vacancies can't be longer than 1 year.

Tony Izzo stated vacancies have happened only 3 times in 100 years.

BK Keramati asked what topics have to be addressed in the Charter.

Wade Beltramo stated who is the chief executive officer, powers, and processes. The term of the members of the Charter Commission is dependent upon general election. In this case, this group's term would expire election day of November 2017. The Commission can conduct hearings or private hearings.

Tony Izzo stated these meetings are usually televised but this meeting is in the Music Hall because the City Council had a meeting this evening in the City Council room.

Laura Chodos asked if additional changes can be made to the Charter after it is voted upon.

Wade Beltramo explained once it is voted on, it would be up to the Council to make Charter revisions.

BK Keramati asked if the vote must be a yes or no or can it be an A, B or C answer.

Wade Beltramo recommended they proposed a charter for people to vote up or down.

Tony Izzo stated there can be a change or no change or leave it alone so there could be three options.

Gordon Boyd asked if the members of the Commission can advocate for or against the Charter once they have produced a final document.

Wade Beltramo stated they can do that on their own time.

Robert Turner thanked Wade for all the information this evening

ESTABLISHMENT OF BYLAWS

Ann Bullock provided the members with a proposed copy of the bylaws (copy attached) and reviewed various sections.

Tony Izzo stated the term 'commissioner' in the bylaws should be changed to members of the Commission or Commission members.

The Commission discussed at length the definition of quorum and consensus.

Gordon Boyd stated he feels they have to vote and take responsibility for what they are doing.

Matt Jones stated the practice within the City with other boards is the majority of the board.

Gordon Boyd suggested the wording be at 'general' or 'special' election in Article 2.

Ann Bullock advised that paragraph is being taken out.

Tony Izzo advised during the 2001 Commission, they had a drafting committee.

Beth Wurtmann asked how many sub-committees would an individual board member be assigned to.

Tony Izzo advised they would only be assigned to not more than 2.

NEW BUSINESS

IDENTIFICATION OF PEOPLE TO INTERVIEW

Bob Turner asked the Commission to think about how they want to hold interviews and who those people should be.

The Commissioner discussed how to identify who the appropriate people are to be interviewed.

OTHER

Nothing to report.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chairman Turner adjourned the meeting at 9:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Margaret LoPresti
Clerk

Approved: