

**CHARTER REVIEW COMMISSION MEETING
CITY OF SARATOGA SPRINGS, NEW YORK
MONDAY, JULY 10, 2000
CITY COURT ROOM
6:30 P.M.**

PRESENT: Harvey Fox, Chair Mia Mouzon
 Rita Balmuth Lee Nelson
 Lew Benton Denise Polit
 Vassar Curtis Margie VanMeter
 Elio Del-Sette Christopher Whann
 Mark Lawton

STAFF PRESENT: Anthony J. Izzo, Assistant City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

Harvey Fox, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Harvey Fox welcomed members to this Commission. He said this Commission had a formidable task ahead of them. He said the work involved in getting to the end result would be quite time consuming over the next year.

Harvey Fox said he had no preconceived notion on whether this Commission would find that an entire new charter was needed or whether modifications only might be necessary. He said it was interesting to know that there is no branch of state government that reviews and/or approves City Charter revisions. He said they will provide information but not review.

Harvey Fox said organizational issues such as: 1) general parliamentary rules; 2) quorum; 3) voting; 4) budget; 5) legal assistance; 6) guest speakers; 7) and dates of meetings need to be worked out. He said there needs to be some public education programs such as: 1) public meetings; 2) public hearings; 3) media; 4) Commission members speaking at clubs and organizations; 5) surveys/polls; and 6) perhaps involving Skidmore college in some capacity. It was suggested that the Internet also be used.

City of Saratoga Springs Charter Review Commission Meeting
Monday, July 10, 2000

Harvey Fox said topics/categories to be review include: interviewing past/present Council members, deputies, department employees ad other City Officials; interviews of officials of other cities/towns/villages should be considered; and review/assessment of the existing charter. It was suggested that City unions and City supervisors be added to the list of those individuals to be interviewed. He said options for City governments include: strong Mayor/Council; weak Mayor/Council; Mayor/Council/Administrator; City Manager/Council; Commission Form and any other suggestions.

Harvey Fox again said this was going to be a big time commitment for members. Margie VanMeter asked if the Commission could last more than a year. Tony Izzo said this Commission cannot last more than two elections without being reviewed and extended. Harvey Fox pointed out that the Commission actually has less than a year because of the time constraints. Denise Polit suggested that a time line be developed. She also asked what would happen if a Commission member determined that he/she could not fill their term. Harvey Fox said it would be up to the Mayor to appoint a new member.

Elio Del-Sette said that guest speakers might want to make their presentation to the entire Commission rather than just the subcommittee. Harvey Fox agreed.

Lew Benton asked if the subcommittee meetings would be open to the public. It was agreed that all meetings would be open to the public.

Denis Polit asked if Commission members were restricted to reviewing and interviewing charters and officials from within New York State or could they go out of state. Harvey Fox said he was not sure. Tony Izzo said the only restriction would be that this charter must be subject to New York State law.

Harvey Fox said his goal this evening was to get organized. He asked that Commission members review the handouts and determine which subcommittee on which they would like to serve. He suggested that members identify two or three subcommittees.

Elio Del-Sette asked about the budget. Harvey Fox said he would work on that issue. He said he was informed by the Mayor that the Commission must be funded.

Denise Polit asked about previous Commissions and material from those Commissions. Harvey Fox said that material was stored at City Hall. He also noted that extensive, detailed files will be maintained on this Commissions work.

**City of Saratoga Springs Charter Review Commission Meeting
Monday, July 10, 2000**

Margie VanMeter asked if there needed to be some discussion on what the City government should be able to do. Harvey Fox said he felt he was not educated enough yet to have that kind of discussion. He said he would feel more comfortable discussing that issue in few months.

Chris Whann suggested that a brainstorming session was necessary. He said those types of conversations can generally be very useful. Harvey Fox agreed.

Margie VanMeter said perhaps some discussion was needed on where we are coming from, why we are serving, what direction needs to be taken, what does the City's government need, etc. Elio Del-Sette agreed these discussions were necessary. He said he did not want to go through this entire process for some "academic exercise". Lee Nelson said she would simply like time to review the material before having these discussions.

Lew Benton said it was important to project an open-minded Commission. He said it would only do a disservice to the community to have some preconceived notions on where this Commission should be heading.

It was agreed that the next meeting of this Commission would be held on Monday, July 17 at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council room.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Harvey Fox adjourned the meeting at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathy Moran
Clerk

Approved: 7/17/00