



- C. Require an annual audit.
- D. Inventory of City real and personal property.
- E. Capital and facility planning and implementation
- F. Adoption of uniform City policies and procedures.
- G. Improve intergovernmental relations.
- H. Restructured Planning and Economic Development.
- I. Develop uniform purchase policy and procedures.

Mark Lawton said Commission members have renumbered and regrouped sections of the charter to make it more user friendly. He said proposed changes are to be budget neutral and if possible reduce the burden on taxpayers. He said there was an attempt to achieve savings to offset any possible additional expenditures and in many changes the savings will continue into the future. In other cases the savings are cost avoidance measures.

Mark Lawton said Commission members also reviewed the County Supervisor positions and have now required them to work closer with the City Council and represent City issues and positions at the county level. He said the Commission has reviewed the bidding process and attempted to streamline that process by raising the threshold on bidding and require competitive bidding.

Mark Lawton informed members of the public that this is a public hearing on a set of proposed amendments to the City's Charter which were prepared by the Commission. He said a full copy of the proposed amendments is on the City's WEB page and on display at the Saratoga Springs Public Library as well as in City Hall. He said written comments on the amendments should be submitted to the Kathy Moran, Engineering Department, City Hall, 474 Broadway before noon on Monday, August 20, 2001.

Mark Lawton said it was important for the public to understand that there is still time and opportunity to effect what will be in the final charter which will be voted on in the upcoming general election. He said the Commission's deadline for submission of the final version is September 6, 2001.

Mark Lawton said there will be a transition period for some of the proposed recommendations, however, the overall document becomes effective in 2004. He explained though that the Commission understood that there would be some items that would take longer to implement. He said the effective date for specific items would be written into the charter.

Mark Lawton said members of the Charter Review Commission were available today to answer any questions that might arise. He then opened the public hearing.

Dan Cogan, Code Enforcement Officer, objected to the Commission's proposal to move the Code Enforcement Office to the Mayor's Office. He said there are many aspects to code enforcement including building, health, safety, fire, etc. He said each of the issues is only a small part of code enforcement. He said perhaps some thought should be given to restructuring code enforcement to include all of code enforcement under a single

Council member. Dan Cogan said another issue he was concerned with was the appointment of deputy commissioners. He said deputy commissioners should be professionally qualified in the area in which they will serve. He said departments need a permanent person who is not affected by the political environment.

Elio Del-Sette said the Commission did address the issue of professional qualifications. He said the proposed charter now allows for the Council to determine the qualifications for various individuals to a certain degree. He said Commission members understand, though, that deputies also serve as a public relations officer for their political officer. He said in DPW there is a Director of Public Works and in Public Safety there are both fire & and police chiefs. He said perhaps rather than changing the language in the charter, it might be better if the unions recommend that there be permanent management officers hired.

Mark Lawton said code enforcement was a difficult issue for Commission members. He said Commission members tried to separate the building, fire, health and safety issues and to place the safety issues with planning and economic development. He said it was an attempt to make it easier for builders to have "one stop shopping" in connection with planning, building, etc. He said, though, it was likely that Commission members would rethink this issue. Dan Cogan said there appears to be a misunderstanding on what his department does. He said generally speaking, his department does not work a lot with the building department. Chris Whann said another issue which was made apparent to Commission members was the problem of record keeping between the building and code enforcement departments. Dan Cogan said perhaps that concern could be addressed through new software programs.

Mark Lawton said the proposed charter does include language which ensures that the requisite qualifications are possessed by deputy commissioners. He said the proposed charter charges Council members with organizing and reorganizing their departments for more efficient and effective operations.

Lew Benton said he was influenced in his thinking by the comments from the building inspector in connection with the code enforcement issue. He said, though, that Commissioner Thomas Curley also made a compelling argument for retaining the code enforcement function in DPW. Dan Cogan said he thought the move of the building inspector to the Mayor's Office was a good move for both builders and City Hall staff; however, he did not want to see the code enforcement office moved to the Mayor's Office. He said according to state law, fire, health, safety and code enforcement all fall under DPS.

John Kirkpatrick, Lt. Fire Department, said he would reinforce the comments made by Dan Cogan in keeping code enforcement under DPS. He said some of the issues of record keeping would be handled through new software programs. He said it was important to have the code enforcement officer in DPS, because in some cases, they have been into

buildings and are aware of the dangerous situations that might arise which in turn helps the fire department in their emergencies. John Kirkpatrick also said the duties of the firefighters have changed over the years and they now include such items as EMS, confined spaces, hazardous materials. He suggested that consideration be given to adding those items in the charter. Lew Benton said he believed that it was the Commission's intent to add such items. Mark Lawton said there are sections in the charter which address some of the issues, however, Commission members would review this suggestion. Lew Benton pointed out that it is now required that any candidate for a firefighter position now must be EMT certified at the time of appointment.

Mary Song agreed with Dan Cogan's statement in that she too believed that the previous move of the building department to the Mayor's Office was a good move. She then suggested that Commission members give some consideration to allowing the county supervisors to share the Council table with Council members in a non-voting capacity. She said it would likely be seen as a symbolic step, but it might also improve and expand on relations between the Council members and the County Supervisors. Mark Lawton said that was a legitimate point. Lew Benton said where they sit is not the real issue. He said the county supervisors have been given greater status through this charter revision. Lew Benton said the concerns expressed about the relationship between the city and the county is a value laden statement. He said that relationship has been strained and it was not likely that it could or should be addressed through charter revision. Elio Del-Sette said he had not resolved in his mind that the county supervisors do in deed represent the City at the county level. He said through this charter revision, it would make them more conscious of their duties in that capacity. Mark Lawton said there are limits as to what the charter can address.

Lew Quillio, 34 Warren Street, said the suggestion of having the county supervisors sit at the table was a good suggestion. He said it was part of this Commission's job to make this government more coherent and what greater coherence than to see the seven individuals all in one place. He agreed it was a symbolic gesture, but also important. Mark Lawton suggested that he write some text to be inserted into the proposed charter on this issue. Lew Quillio agreed. Lew Quillio then asked about the issue of having the charter referendum and the open space referendum on the same ballot. Tony Izzo said in his research he found that if there is a charter referendum on the ballot, then no other referendums are allowed within 60 days. Lew Quillio asked if Commission members had yet reviewed his recommendations on his concern on the conflict of creating and holding positions by Council members. Chris Whann said he reviewed the information and found it helpful. He said it would be reviewed by the full Commission at Monday night's meeting. Tony Izzo said there may be ways to make that text more clear.

Amy Durland, 33 Lakewood Drive, commended Commission members for their efforts. She agreed that these are basic quality of life issues. She said she believed that the overall proposed changes would promote coordination and communication. She said she especially supported the creation of the Office of Parks, Open Lands and Historic

Preservation. She said it was time for that function to be identified and coordinated. She said open space protection, maintenance and creation of parks and historic preservation are central to what is special about the City and is also critical to the City's success. She said it was both appropriate and necessary to identify this function.

Kristen Dart said she thought it should be up to the Mayor to decide whether the county supervisors should sit at the Council table. She then asked how the new position of the Director of Parks, Open Lands and Historic Preservation would coordinate with the Recreation Department. She pointed out that recently there had been problems with the Recreation Department due to the lack of coordination/communication. She asked if that Director would be required to attend the Recreation Department meetings or would minutes be sufficient. Lew Benton said it was implicit in the language that there be coordination. Kristen Dart said it was implicit before but it didn't happen. Elio Del-Sette explained that the Recreation Department is a quasi-independent body which has the right to hire & fire, maintain their programs, etc. He said the relationship between the Recreation Department and the Mayor's Office is for budgetary purposes only. He said, though, in the proposed charter that relationship has been somewhat expanded. Elio Del-Sette also said there is always the possibility that the Recreation Commission could be abolished. He said if abolished, the function could then be placed under the Mayor's Office with full day-to-day oversight of that function. Mark Lawton explained that the charter addresses administrative responsibilities and it gave the Recreation Commission a place to report to the Mayor's Office. He said the Recreation Department will now also be required to submit their budget in the same manner and form as all other departments. He said they will also be required to coordinate with the Human Resources Department. Lew Benton said he did not see the Recreation Department as having any more unique status than the Planning or Zoning Board of Appeals which are quasi-independent. He said they all exist by legislative action under the Council's discreet authority. He said the Commission listened to John Irving on his concerns about establishing a more formal relationship between the Recreation Commission and the Council. He said the Recreation Commission and the Office of Parks, Open Lands and Historic Preservation will perform separate, distinct functions.

Thomas Curley, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety, said he would like to see some information on the financial impact of this proposed charter. He said he would also like to see code enforcement remain in DPS. He asked if the capital budget process would allow for emergencies. Mark Lawton said emergency measures are addressed in other sections of the charter. Elio Del-Sette said there had been a concerned expressed previously about the lack of DPS representation on the Capital Program Committee. Thomas Curley said he would like to be sure that his department is somehow involved in the process. Thomas Curley asked how Human Resources will handle training or would the departments retain that function. Mark Lawton said the charter is not a management study and at this time there is no way of knowing who would maintain that function. He said the charter addresses coordination rather than operation.

Thomas Curley said he also had some concerns about items taking effect due to the Council's lack of action. He said he believed that the Council should be responsible for instituting policy through approval or disapproval rather than lack of action. Lew Benton agreed that the Commission should not force a legislative body to legislate.

The clerk left the meeting at 8:30 p.m.