

**MERRIMACK CHARTER COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
January 10, 2006**

Commission members present: Chairman Tom Mahon, Vice Chairman Heather Anderson, Secretary Fran L'Heureux, Peter Batula, Robert Kelley, Finlay Rothhaus, Tim Tenhave, Lon Woods, and David Yakuboff.

Chairman Mahon convened the meeting of the Charter Commission at 7:07 pm in the Conference Room of the Town Hall.

**Announcements**

Chairman Mahon was pleased to announce that the state agencies had no objection to the proposed charter as modified after the Commission's last meeting. This means that the Charter may be moved to the ballot after the Commission completes a Final Report and transmits the Charter and letters from the state and the Commission's attorney to the Board of Selectmen by February 1, 2006.

**Public Comment**

Dennis King, 10 Derry Street, addressed several questions and concerns to the Commission. Mr. King thanked the Commission for their efforts. He then queried the Commission on the operations of the Deliberative Session under the proposed Charter, the opportunities for the voters to have a voice under the proposed Charter, the initiator of any pay increases for the Council members, and his concern over the ability of the Council to adopt land use changes. Finally, Mr. King asked the Commission what the Commission feels is not working with the present system. There was significant discussion on each of these items and examples of current and proposed means of dealing with issues were reviewed at length. Mr. King was given a copy of the comparison data that had been included in the Preliminary Report with the understanding that the comparison was being amended to reflect the actions of the Commission and the state agencies during the review process. A corrected version is in process by the Commission. At the end of the discussion, Mr. King indicated that many of his questions and concerns had been answered by the Commission.

**Reports**

Chairman Mahon reported on his activities and contacts with the state agencies. He reported on attending a meeting at the Local Government Center on January 9<sup>th</sup> regarding proposed amendments to RSA 49-B. Mr. Mahon reported that he had requested an appointment with the Board of Selectmen on February 2<sup>nd</sup> to formally present the proposed Charter. Mr. Yakuboff queried if the entire Commission should attend. It was agreed that all members would attend.

**Review State Response**

The Commission moved on to a detailed review of the contents of the letter from the state agencies regarding their review of the proposed Charter. The letter stated in

several places that the agencies have no objection to the proposed Charter. The agencies responded in detail to the Commission's query regarding the quorum that was originally contained in the proposed Charter. The state agencies used the letter to also address the use of the April dates for the Annual Meeting date in the proposed Charter.

### **Public Awareness/Education Effort**

The Commission had a wide ranging discussion about the methods that might be employed to make the voters aware of the provisions of the Charter.

Heather Anderson suggested that the Commission efforts focus on five key points of the Charter. Some of the possible points suggested are: a more dynamic and flexible form of government that is not as restricted as the present form; more representation; shorter ballots; and more responsive with the ability for initiative and referendum petitions.

The Final Report needs to be crafted and should address the advantages of the Charter.

Other suggested means for communication were:

- Presentations to Civic and Service Groups
- Prepare a Frequently Asked Questions flyer
- A Voter's Guide
- Meet with Editorial Boards
- Prepare a Presentation that the Commission members can use at meetings and coffees.
- Use of the Public Access channels
- Questions and Answer meetings with the Commission or Commission members
- Press Releases

Chairman Mahon appointed himself, Heather Anderson, Tim Tenhave, and David Yakuboff to a subcommittee to develop these ideas and report back to the full Commission at the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. The Commission will meet at least once in the interim.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Action on the outstanding sets of meeting minutes was tabled until the Commission's meeting of January 17<sup>th</sup>.

### **Other Business**

There was no other business to come before the Commission.

### **Adjournment**

A motion was made by Lon Woods and seconded by Robert Kelley to adjourn the meeting at 9:17 PM. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,  
Thomas Mahon, Chairman