



Town of Somers
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION

WHO WE ARE

Bob Chester
Terri Schmidt

Terri Henderson
Graham Van Kueren

Andy Rockett
Ralph Williams

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

- 2 Public hearings (before, after)
- 5 – 15 members
- $\leq 1/3$ hold public office
- Bare majority, any political party



**Town of Somers
CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION**

OUR PROCESS

- **Extensive statutory and regulatory review**
- **Public Input**
- **2 Working Groups**
- **Interviews, Somers & other towns**
- **Presentation, Professional Managers**
- **Multiple drafts, extensive discussion**



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TOWN CHARGE

1. Shall the role of Town Clerk become an appointive rather than elective position?
2. Shall the town remain guided by an elected Board of Selectmen, or should we move to a Town Manager form of government?
3. Shall the Zoning and Planning boards be combined into one appointed/elective body?
4. Shall the number of members on the Zoning Commission be revised?



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COMBINE ZONING & PLANNING?

WHY YES?

- More efficient
- Faster, cheaper
- Majority of CT towns combined
- Attract more developers, to..
- Encourage development RT 190

WHY NO?

- Planning may suffer
- Little evidence of efficiencies
- Little evidence of need
- Current pace of town development
- If it ain't broke...



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REVISE # MEMBERS ZONING COMMISSION?

- Acknowledge need for “background knowledge”
- Time demand
- Ongoing difficulty finding volunteers – all Boards & Commissions
- 2 Current vacancies - Alternates



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FORM OF GOVERNMENT

Why Change?

- Expertise necessary in First Selectman
- Ramp-up time
- Lost opportunities = lost \$\$
- Potential “costs” every 2 years
- Workload on current Selectmen

What did you consider?

- Status Quo
- Town Manager & Board
- Mayor & Town Council, etc.
- Key CRC Issue: Elected Chief Executive



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FIRST SELECTMAN & TOWN ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Considerations

- **Connection of electorate to Chief Executive Officer**
- **Recognition of expertise needed**
- **Acknowledgement of potential loss of \$\$**
- **Need for full time position to manage town**
- **Practicalities – “Power Centers”, “Fiefdoms”, etc.**
- **Costs**



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CURRENT PROPOSAL

- Retain First Selectman as actual and statutory Chief Executive Officer
- Town Administrative Officer runs day-to-day operations
- All town departments report to Town Administrative Officer
- Town Administrative Officer reports to First Selectman
- Reduced administrative demand on First Selectman; Reduce pay
- Increase BOS to 5 members – workload!



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TOWN CLERK?

- Same argument for professional Fire Chief, Town Administrative Officer....
 - Expertise needed!
 - Training Tim
 - Potential exposures & lost \$\$
 - Need for continuity & expertise
 - Risk of constant turnover
- Report to Town Administrative Officer



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OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Gender neutrality**
- **Registrar of voters to 4-year terms**
- **Finance officials report to Town Administrative Officer; Consistent Name**
- **Clarify Town Meeting language; Retain ability to lower Budget at Town Meeting**



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QUESTIONS & SUGGESTIONS