

WESTCHESTER COUNTY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
MINUTES

JANUARY 10, 2013

Members in Attendance: Richard Wishnie, Jeff Binder, Alfred Gatta, Herman Geist, Derickson Lawrence, John Mattis, Steve Mayo, Anne McAndrews, Florence McCue, Paul Meissner, David Menken, Jane Morgenstern, Vincenza Restiano, Bertrand Sellier, Matthew Thomas, Ronald Volino, Gary Zuckerman, Paul Windels

Absent Members: Raymond Belair, Julie Killian, Guy Parisi, Sam Zerka

County Staff in Attendance: Stacey Dolgin-Kmetz, Chris Crane, Melanie Montalto, Justin Adin

Commission Counsel: Lester Steinman

MINUTES

Chairman Wishnie called the meeting to order at 7:06 PM.

With a motion by Mr. Gatta, seconded by Mr. Lawrence the minutes of October 25, November 29, and December 20, 2012 were approved with a vote of 14-0.

Chairman Wishnie stated that there was a Steering Committee meeting earlier in the day. He went over the procedures the Commission will follow going forward. Chairman Wishnie stated that the Commission will be looking to hire an additional consultant to help the Commission complete its work, Dr. Jerald Benjamin. Mr. Steinman gave a brief history of Dr. Benjamin's work experience and accomplishments, along with how he would help the Commission accomplish its work.

Chairman Wishnie discussed planning a retreat sometime in March or April and what he wanted to accomplish. Mr. Meissner asked about the procedure of hiring Dr. Benjamin. Chairman Wishnie stated it would have to go through the Board of Acquisitions & Contracts, and was happy to report support from both the County Executive and the Board of Legislators. Mr. Meissner suggested that his curriculum vitae be shared before any decision is made, which Mr. Steinman stated he would forward to the Commission.

The Commission asked how Dr. Benjamin's function would differ from that of Mr. Steinman's role. Chairman Wishnie stated that Mr. Steinman brings legal expertise to the Commission whereas Dr. Benjamin's expertise is in public policy, having already worked on several charter revision commissions in the state. He would in essence help the commission facilitate their job more efficiently and thoroughly.

The Commission asked about the mandate regarding the Commission's report to the Board of Legislators. When the final report is presented to the Board, the Board has ninety-days to vote yea or nay on the Commission's recommendations. The report will be received by the current Board in December, however the newly elected Board will vote on it the following year during the new legislative session.

Mr. Lawrence brought up the point that they need to follow the format that has already been laid out in order to proceed efficiently and avoid issues later on down the road. Chairman Wishnie stated that the materials received are approved documents stating the committees' issues and recommendation for the entire Commission to review it; just because a focus group forwards an issue doesn't necessarily mean there is full agreement. Mr. Lawrence clarified he meant the actual formatting of the documents.

Chris Crane stated that as the issues have been under review and refined for some time now, a set group of issues needed to be put forth so as to not dilute the Commission's message. There was a discussion as to whether or not the steering groups' reports are made public. Chairman Wishnie briefly summed up the Commissions plans for the near future.

Chairman Wishnie stated that the next meeting will be on January 24th, 2013.

With a motion by Gary Zuckerman seconded Mr. Lawrence by the Charter Revision Commission adjourned at 7:30 PM.