

**WESTCHESTER COUNTY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION
MINUTES
JUNE 15, 2011**

Members in Attendance: Randy Sellier, Anne McAndrews, Jane Morgenstern, Gary Zuckerman, Derickson Lawrence, Alfred Gatta, Florence McCue, Richard Wishnie, Herman Geist, Paul Windels, Vincenza Restiano, Raymond Belair, Guy Parisi, David Menken, Stephen Mayo, Jeff Binder, Matt Thomas, Ron Volino.

Guests in Attendance: Mindy Aronowitz, Don Hughes, Savina Trangle, Janet Zagoria, Michael Amodio.

Legislators in Attendance: Ken Jenkins, Bill Ryan, John Nonna

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

MINUTES

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

The Chairman of the Board of Legislators made opening and introductory remarks.

The Commission Members introduced themselves.

Legislator Bill Ryan, the sponsor of the bill that created the Commission, gave an overview of the creation of the Commission. He provided the tasks at hand to review the County Charter and make recommendations to the County on how the County can be better and more efficiently run and operated. He told the Commission that they are independent from the County and should make their decisions based on their review. He discussed possibly streamlining or expanding. He said that the Commission will see and consider the role the state plays with mandated programs and what changes may need to be made on a state level as well.

Legislator John Nonna, Chair of the Legislation Committee spoke to the Commission about the history of the decision to create the Commission. He said it has been over twenty years since the charter has been examined and so the mandates that we put in the legislation are very broad to allow the Commission to explore every option. He discussed the guide in everyone's packet which shows what can and cannot be done.

George Oros, Chief of Staff to the County Executive welcomed everyone and stated that the Administration will work closely with the legislature as well as the Commission to provide the resources needed to get the work done. He said that the County Executive's

staff and Commissioners are available to assist the Commission when needed. He briefly explained the problems that residents of Westchester are or may be facing today.

Legislator Ryan went over the legislation that created the Commission. He then introduced the agenda item for the evening to select a Chairman and Vice Chairman. The Commission discussed this issue amongst its members and agreed that because many of them are meeting for the first time this evening, they would like to wait to elect the Chair and Vice Chair, however an interim Chair is needed until a process can be put in place. Mr. Zuckerman nominated Richard Wishnie as the interim Chair.

With a motion by Mr. Menken and seconded by Mr. Zuckerman, Mr. Wishnie was made the Interim Chair with a vote of 17-0.

Mr. Wishnie stated that anyone who wishes to be the chair, vice-chair or secretary, should submit their resume to Ms. Montalto and we can then circulate them for a decision at a future date.

It was suggested that the Commission members be given identification cards to have access to the county building and parking lot.

The Commission discussed how often they will meet going forward. Mr. Gatta stated that the deadline for the report is not realistic and we will probably need an extension. He stated that we have to figure out how much we want to bite off. He said we will need to meet once to twice a month. Mr. Mayo agreed stating that we will need to identify at least two days a month to meet. Mr. Zuckerman suggested that a committee structure is needed to properly take on the task at hand, and that the committees should meet more often and the whole group should meet once a month. Mr. Wishnie stated that the Commission will receive a copy of the 1988 Commission report which shows the committees that they chose to use as a system to get the work done.

Mr. Binder asked how the public will be kept informed about the Commission's proceedings and is the County going to help the Commission connect with the media. Ms. Dolgin-Kmetz explained that the meeting is being live streamed on the Board of Legislators website and it will be archived so the public can watch at any time. It was also explained that a website can be linked to the county page and created for the Commission. Mr. Sellier stated that some point he would like to have public forums where residents can provide their opinion as well.

A discussion ensued regarding the different sections of the legislation. The Commission agreed that they will find a way to work within the scope of the legislation.

Mr. Wishnie stated that we will meet again one month from now and availability will be organized with the Commission staff.

Stacey Dolgin-Kmetz, Counsel to the Board of Legislators gave a powerpoint presentation of the history and structure of Westchester County government and the

structure of counties in New York. A copy of the presentation is on file and available for review.

The Commission requested a copy of the presentation, the 1988 Commission Report, Westchester 2000, and a summary of the various areas that are off limits and areas that can be looked at. It was also requested that the link to the online charter be made available as well.

The Commission discussed the process the Board of Legislators will follow after the report is issued.

Mr. Menken suggested that everyone looked at the County Planning Department's website for Westchester 2025. He stated it is full of interesting information that could be helpful.

Mr. Zuckerman asked that at the next meeting the Board of Legislators and the County Executive's Office speak to the Commission about their specific concerns that helped bring about enacting this Commission so the members will have a place to start from.

With a motion by Mr. Zuckerman, seconded by Mr. Wishnie the Westchester County Charter Revision Commission adjourned at 8:32 pm.