**TOWN OF HARWICH**

**By-Laws/Charter Review Committee**

**MEETING MINUTES**

**Tuesday, August 16, 2016 @ 6:30 pm**

**Town Hall Library**

In attendance: Anita Doucette, Don Howell, Katie O’Sullivan, Joe Powers, Deborah Sementa.

Others present: Angelo LaMantia, BOS; Sandra Hall

**Call to Order**

Chairman Howell called the meeting to order @ 6:34pm.

**Approval of Minutes**

Minutes from the April 26, 2016 meeting were approved with revisions.

Chairman Howell welcomed Joe Powers to the Committee. The yearly committee organization was then conducted as required by the Charter. The organization of all town committees must occur the first meeting after July 1 each year. The nominations voted on and approved unanimously are Don Howell, Chair; Joe Powers, Vice Chair; Deborah Sementa, Clerk.

**Old Business**

There was discussion regarding the consistency of the numeric sections and clarity of language of the Charter revisions as written by Kopelman and Paige (K&P) on our behalf last year. The Bylaw/Charter Committee was forced to rewrite everything written by K&P for last year’s Town Meeting.

**New Business**

Sandy Hall presented her observations and concerns regarding the implementation of an oversight committee for compliance with the Charter (as contained in her letter to the Board of Selectem (BOS)). Mr. Howell stated that the Bylaw/Charter Review Committee (“Charter Review Committee”) does not have delegated authority to enforce the Charter, but rather to make recommendations on changes to it. Nor would we wish to hold a dual role of recommending charter revisions and acting as an enforcement body.

The Committee then began to review the letter point by point, with Sandy Hall and Angelo LaMantia debating each other over what was true or not true in that letter. Mr. LaMantia stressed that the charter was too vague to be enforced in many areas. Katie O’Sullivan was recognized to say that she didn’t see how we could improve most of the language cited as it already seemed pretty clear and it would be hard to clarify it further (a sentiment shared by all committee members). At one point, Ms. Hall suggested to Mr. LaMantia that he was overstepping his role as a liaison by interjecting his thoughts in the Committee’s analysis (the committee having invited Ms. Hall to this meeting for just that purpose so as to be prepared for a later BOS joint meeting).

The Charter Review Committee will have a meeting with the Board of Selectmen to see what direction we need to take with Sandy Hall’s document. Mr. LaMantia will advise us of that date.

A Motion was made and seconded that the Bylaw/Charter Review Committee draft all future potential articles first and then send to K&P for counsel to review regarding legal sufficiency only. The vote was unanimous.

Mr. LaMantia stated that the Board of Selectmen would like this Committee to go through the Charter and prioritize what needs to be changed. Don Howell stated that last year’s initiative was to review (and then correct) the Kopelman & Paige language change recommendations, but the committee had previously agreed to go through the Charter methodically with an eye towards new revisions this year.

Meeting adjourned at 8:09pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Deborah A. Sementa, Recording Secretary