

Government Study Commission Public Meeting
Wednesday, October 22, 2014
7:00 PM

Ken Womack called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

Ken Womack gave a presentation on the home rule history, process and recommendations.

Fred Hait raised concern that term limits would keep good people out of office.

Marsha Sacrison commented that term limits would allow new people the opportunity to run and bring fresh ideas

Wayne Ulsh pointed out there are people who have been on council for 25 years term limits would allow new people to bring new ideas.

Phil Shevlin clarified that at the end of a term, the member would sit out for 2 years, not a full 4 year term.

Robert Winston said that that the time served by someone who is appointed to a vacant term does not apply toward their own term limits.

Ken Womack addressed two issues published in the Sentinel. 1) Council can raise their pay and 2) Council/Mayor cannot hold paid positions as Borough employees. Ken Womack clarified that the commission's intent is that Council will not have the authority to raise their own pay or to be Borough employees. A suggestion was made to add language to the charter to clarify these issues.

It's the commission's desire to retain the best parts of Borough Code.

Ken Womack commented that under the charter, council cannot raise taxes higher than the limits allowed by the Borough Code.

The final charter must be approved no later than November 21, 2014. Changes to the draft provided for the public hearing will be incorporated in the document and posted on the website. Questions on the draft charter or the government study commission process can be sent to John Sacrison via the links on the Borough's website.

Ken Womack adjourned the public meeting at 7:45 pm but invited the public to stay if they wanted to listen to the commissions continuing discussion.

Members discussed the contradiction in the charter about council consisting of 8 members. Clarification was made that one phrase addresses the transition to the new form of government and the the final form of government.

Ken Womack suggested the charter use language in current Borough ordinance which states that Council receives the maximum salary allowed by the Borough Code. The current Borough Code also prohibits an elected official from being a paid employee. The commission will address changes to the charter at the next meeting to address both of these issues.

Ken Womack cautioned that the commission must comply with the deadline set by law for the report and draft charter, which is no later than November 21, 2014. After being submitted, the Borough Secretary has 5 days to certify and submit the report to the Cumberland County Bureau of Elections. Ken Womack said Jane Rigler provided a number of good suggestions for editing the charter, one of which include a bad reference. He will address these at the next meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Marlies Ries
Assistant Finance Director