

# East Longmeadow Charter Commission NEWS

Educational Material

March 2016

## So what is a Charter?

A municipal Charter is the basic document that defines the organization, powers, functions and essential procedures of the Town Government. It is comparable to the Constitution of the United States. The Charter is, therefore, the most important legal document of any Town.

Currently, East Longmeadow has no Charter!

## Charter Commission recommends a Town Manager and Town Council

The Charter Commission after extensive research, interviews and hours of discussions regarding the 5 basic forms of government, which are available to the Town, has chosen to recommend, a Town Manager who will replace the current Board of Selectmen as our Executive branch, and a 7 member Council as our legislative branch. replacing town meeting. The Town council will choose a Town Manager based on his/her educational and municipal management background.

The Town Council will also have oversight of the Town Manager, holding him/her accountable for the execution of the Town's executive business and management.

The Commission listened during the public hearings and you requested a government which was more responsive with a centralized and streamlined approach to handling Town issues. The Charter Commission is presenting to the Town a Charter which the Commission believes will streamline and centralize Town government.

As a result of choosing a Town Manager to **replace** the Board of Selectmen our legislative branch must be a Town Council by state law.

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*The Charter Commission  
can only present one  
Charter option to the voters*

*- Collins Center*

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**The Charter Commission was extremely concerned with making sure the public has a voice which will be heard. This is why the public will have:**

- **The right to speak at all Town Council meetings**
- **The right to petition the Council for action on a particular measure, at no cost to the petitioner.**
- **The right to a citizen initiative measure**  
(put the measure on a ballot for the entire town to vote on it)
- **The right to overturn the vote of any elected board, by referendum**
- **The right to recall elected officials**
- **These rights do not exist with our current form of government.**

## In This Issue

- What is a Charter?
- Commission recommends Town Manager/ Town Council
- 5 Options for our government
- Town Administrator resigns
- Commission identifies problems
- Time and place to vote

**The voice of every citizen is important and the Commission understands that.**

# Listed are the 5 possible forms of Government.

## Executive Branch

## Legislative Branch

## Description and qualifications:

### Town Manager

### Town Council

The Town Council is elected by the voters. A councilor may be removed from office via recall provision.

The Town Manager must have education and work experience in government management. A Manager can be removed if needed in a timely manner as provided for in the Charter or their contract.

### Mayor

### Town Council

The Town Council is elected by the voters. A councilor may be removed from office via recall provision.

The only qualification to be a Mayor is you must be a registered town voter. no previous experience required. A Mayor is difficult to remove even with a recall provision. Additional employees such as a town administrator may be required.

### Board of Selectmen/

Strong Town Administrator/Manager

(Longmeadow's form of government)

### Open Town Meeting

The Board of Selectmen oversees the Town Manager and sets policy.

**This form of government was proposed to East Longmeadow voters in 2005, and was rejected**

### Board of Selectmen

Executive Secretary and /or Strong Town Administrator

(Amherst's form of government)

### Representative Town Meeting

Townspeople elect representatives to speak for them at town meeting.

Town meetings take multiple days to complete. Very cumbersome

### Board of Selectmen

Executive Secretary/  
weak Town Administrator

(East Longmeadow's  
Current form of government)

### Open Town Meeting

**No change**

**Keep things the same**



If you have questions regarding the proposed Charter, please contact a Commission member. We would be glad to talk to you.

Get clear answers to your questions directly from the Commission members who wrote the Charter.

## How to contact Charter Commissioners

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# East Longmeadow's Interim Town Administrator resigns

## Charter Commission Identified the most significant problem with our current form of Government

The Commission after extensive interviews with Town departments has identified a critical problem within the Town. The separate elected boards have no centralized authoritative figure or department, meaning each of the 7 elected boards are separate from one another and do not answer to another department. With each department being individual and separate there is a lack of communication and departments don't have to work as a single efficient unit. Although many boards work very well together there is no course of correction when one chooses to act on its own accord. A Town Manager will bring a more efficient and responsive government to the public.

December 4, 2015

Board of Selectmen  
Town of East Longmeadow  
60 Center Square  
East Longmeadow, MA 01028

Chairman Federici, Mr. Gorman, Ms. Thorpe,

Effective today, I am providing my required 30-day notice, with my last day being January 3, 2016.

I appreciate the opportunity to have assisted the Town of East Longmeadow as it moves forward to establish a new form of government that will promote effectiveness and efficiency. The most important and critical decision faces the community this coming April 2016, namely having a professional Town manager with the responsibility and authority to manage the whole Town, under the direction of a Town Council. It is the only way anything will change in providing Town residents with the responsive government they need and deserve. The Town needs to be ONE Town, with one Manager, and one elected Board, not separate Boards and departments with separate supervision and agendas. Hopefully, the Town will move forward, make decisions and take actions without postponement, and never lose sight that the Town works for the public.

I wish you all the best,



Greg Moyer

## Moving too fast!

The Commission has heard that it is moving too quickly.

The Charter process has been deliberative and has provided the opportunity for participation and comments by all voters.

The Commission has held 32 public meetings including 2 public hearings. To date more than 540 hours have been invested in crafting this Charter. This does not include each members own reading and research they did separately.

The Home Rule Charter Commission act MGL C 43b states that a preliminary charter must be presented within 16 months. East Longmeadow's Charter Commission was elected in April of 2015 and the Charter proposal will be on the Annual Election ballot on April 12, 2016

## May 27th 2015 Public hearing comments

- **We need change**
- **Single person in charge**
- **Education and work experience needs to be the basis for employment**
- **Professional management**
- **Faster day to day decisions in Town operations**
- **Accountability**
- **The need to retain the residents voice in Town Government**
- **This proposed Charter addresses all of those needs.**



# Vote April 12 7 a.m.- 8 p.m.

## Birchland Park Middle School

### Every vote is important

- ◆ This proposed Charter provides for its first review in 4 years and a periodic review every 10 years after that.
- ◆ The proposed Charter gives all citizens a voice in Town government via citizen initiative measures which currently do not exist.
- ◆ A **recall** provision for elected officials is included in the Charter.
- ◆ The Board of Selectmen will be **replaced** by a Town Manager who is experienced and educated in running a municipal government.
- ◆ The structure of the School Committee will not change.
- ◆ The Charter provides for a streamlined government which will serve the residents.
- ◆ East Longmeadow currently does not have a Charter.

