

Background on the Charter Amendment

Before we start public comments — without advocating the merits of the current Charter or the proposed Charter — it is useful to review the history that led us to this moment.

Last spring, there were several resident meetings and a groundswell of opinion that the Town should consider a new Charter that provides for a Town Manager form of government.

When I became mayor, I requested that resident Janet Saura, a lawyer, and other residents work with Town Attorney Bill Doney to draft a new Charter that the voters could consider in a referendum next March.

They worked diligently to do so. We should all be very grateful for the effort that they put into this project. Because of complexities in Florida's election laws, we prepared for a referendum in March 2024.

In late July, residents were informed that the proposed draft Charter was posted on the Town website along with an FAQ to compare the current Charter with the draft.

A workshop was held in person and via Zoom on August 10. Residents made several suggested changes to the proposed Charter before, at the workshop, and after — some of which are incorporated into the proposed Charter.

The two most important are these:

- The proposed charter requires a town referendum to outsource police and town manager functions; that decision could not be made by Commissioners.
- the proposed charter also ensures the ability to continue to function as Town, if for any reason we only had three Commissioners.

Shortly after the workshop in August, the revised Charter was posted along with a fresh set of FAQs for residents to review. In addition, Janet Saura explained the draft in Inlet Outlet, also posted on the Town site. Since then, we have sent two emails and texts asking residents for their questions, comments, and recommendations on the Charter revision. Many of you did comment; and changes were made. Ample opportunities for residents to submit comments and changes in the proposed Charter were built into the timeline.

I have had many discussions with residents on this subject clarifying the pros and cons of the two Charters. Thanks to the interest and diligence of Bob Sommerville, in particular, it's clear that if the new Charter is adopted next March, that a series of ordinances must be enacted to detail the duties of the manager and his or her authority and responsibility vis a vis the Commission.

Tonight, we are going to have the second vote on the new Charter.

There is plenty of time between now and March 19 for residents to discuss and debate the merits of the proposed Charter before voting on it. This is an important step for the Town to take.

It is time for public comments.