

INTRODUCTION TO PROPOSED CHARTER REVISION

May 2010 Town Meeting passed Article 35 instructing a Government Study Committee to study and offer recommendations regarding a Town Manager form of government or act on anything relative thereto. *

Since August this Committee has studied forms of government in other communities similar to Norwell, spoken with the Massachusetts Municipal Association as well as citizens and officials from other towns, and examined a number of town charters. The Commission then met with every available board in Norwell, a number of past and present Norwell volunteers and interested citizens.

Based on our research, we determined that given the increased complexity of government regulations, fiscal challenges and a litigious society, certain changes in the structure of Norwell town government are needed. Norwell has a budget of approximately \$40,000,000. Revisions to the existing Charter, among other issues, will increase the clarity and accountability needed to efficiently operate our municipal government.

At the same time, we agreed that Norwell would be best served by a Town Administrator rather than a Town Manager. With the recommended Charter revisions, a Town Administrator would have the tools needed to deal with the challenges of governing without removing opportunities for citizens to serve and to give input into the policies governing our community.

The Charter Revision includes a number of changes based on public feedback to earlier drafts. The proposed revisions to the Charter which follow will be voted on at Town Meeting. When the proposed Charter Revision refers to repealing a section, it is referring to a section of the existing charter which can be found through a link on our website. If the proposed Charter Revision does not repeal or amend a section in the existing Charter, then that section in the existing Charter will remain unchanged.

We thank those of you who have taken the time to meet with us. Based on all we have learned, we unanimously agreed these recommendations would improve transparency, accountability, efficiency and collaboration and thus hopefully encourage our dedicated volunteers and employees to continue to serve our town.

** In addition, section 4-2 (b) of the Norwell Town Charter states the Government Study Commission "shall study the structure and functioning of the Town government, and may make such investigations with respect thereto as it deems appropriate. It may recommend and initiate action for the improvement of Town government through Charter amendment and revision, bylaw amendment and revision, bylaw amendment and revision, or otherwise."*

