

CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION AS APPOINTED IN VIOLATION OF STATE STATUTE AND WOODBURY TOWN CHARTER

For immediate release from the Woodbury Democratic Town Committee, March 8, 2010

In Woodbury, the Charter Revision Commission has an important responsibility: to review the Town Charter and make recommendations for amendments in the best interest of all residents of Woodbury. For that reason, the Commission should be as non-partisan as possible, which is why there is a more stringent requirement for majority and minority parties' representation on this commission than on other town boards and commissions, and why General Statute 7-190(a) governs the composition of the Charter Revision Commission.

The Democratic Town Committee of Woodbury believes that the composition of the Charter Revision Commission, approved at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on February 25th 2010, by a 2-1 vote, with Democratic Selectman George Hale voting nay, is in violation of Connecticut General Statute 7-190(a). The Woodbury Town Charter states that appointments to the Charter Revision Commission shall be made in accordance with Section 7-190(a) of the General Statutes, which states '...not more than a bare majority of whom shall be members of any one political party...' The slate approved on February 25th consists of 5 Republicans and 2 Democrats, which does not constitute a 'bare majority'. For a commission of 7 members, a bare majority would be 4 members.

Three well-qualified Democrats, with experience on Boards of Finance, Selectmen, and Historic District Commission, as well as legal expertise, who volunteered and whose nominations are supported by the Woodbury DTC, were excluded from the Charter Revision Commission. Ignoring all recommendations from the DTC circumvents the usual vetting process for commission nominations, and signifies a highly partisan process for a commission that is specifically designed to be as non-partisan as possible. In addition, the Charter Revision Commission would benefit significantly from having current Board of Finance and legal expertise, which are lacking from the commission approved on February 25th.

The Charter Revision Commission as approved at the Board of Selectmen's meeting on February 25, 2010 is in violation of the current Town Charter and State Statute 7-190(a). The Woodbury Democratic Town Committee requests a new slate to be presented at the next Board of Selectmen's meeting to remedy the violation. The new slate will also provide an opportunity to include current Board of Finance and legal expertise. In the meantime, the Charter Revision Commission should not hold any commission meetings or take any actions.