

Albany County Charter Review Commission
December 11, 2013, 6:30 p.m.
Guilderland Town Hall

Members Present:

Henry M. Greenberg
Jacob M. Crawford
Patrick O. Dalzell
Paul L. Weafer
Bob Batson
Ami Schnauber
Chris Hannifan
Willow Baer

Others in Attendance:

Carina Comiskey
Patrick Collins
Arnis Zilgme

Mr. Greenberg called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

The Commission heard from Aimee Allaud, the Communications Director for the League of Women Voters. Ms. Allaud spoke about the five concerns that the League of Women Voters have with the current charter. Those issues are:

1. The League sees accountability and efficiency as the most important issues to be addressed.
2. The League would give the County Executive full veto power, with a possible 2/3 override by the legislature.
3. The League has recommended for many years moving to the appointed medical examiner system rather than the current four elected coroners.
4. An Administrative Code is included in the current charter, but has not been funded.
5. Independent Redistricting Commission. The League is a proponent of adopting such a commission as a basis for redistricting in 2021 after the next census.

The Commission then asked Ms. Allaud questions regarding the list of concerns posed by the League of Women Voters.

The Commission heard from Albany County Coroner Paul Marra. Mr. Marra spoke about the functionality of the Albany County Coroner system and how it differentiates from that of a medical examiner system in name only. Mr. Marra spoke in detail about the duties of an Albany County Coroner and how those duties are replicated in a medical examiner system by Death Scene Investigators. Mr. Marra was joined by Dr. Michael Sikirica, the Rensselaer County Medical Examiner who also spoke about the similarities between a county coroner system and a medical examiner system. The Commission asked Mr. Marra and Dr. Sikirica questions regarding their duties as a county coroner and a medical examiner, respectively.

The Commission continued a discussion from the previous meeting of the language in Article 26, as well as throughout the Albany County Charter regarding the vacancies of department heads in the county. The Commission discussed the current protocol of filling department head vacancies within the county and the possible benefits of changing that protocol.

The Commission agreed that its next meeting should be scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, 2013, at 6:30 p.m.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Greenburg, which motion was seconded by Mr. Crawford and unanimously approved.