

WESTCHESTER COUNTY CHARTER REVISION COMMISSION  
**CHARTER AND CODE FOCUS GROUP MINUTES**

November 15, 2012

Members in Attendance: Florence McCue  
Jane Morgenstern

County Staff in Attendance: Stacey Dolgin-Kmetz

Focus Group **Vice Chair McCue** called the meeting to order at 10:30 am at 595 West Hartsdale Ave., White Plains, NY 10607.

We began planning the layout and the outline for the focus group report.

We reviewed our mission statement and realized on how far we had come toward attaining our original goals. Some of our goals had been too broad and others had been too difficult to for us to attain. We now know that Stacey and Chris are already knowledgeable about the language and the function and the nuances of the charter and that they have been and will continue to be an invaluable resource as we move forward in our focus group tasks. We are fortunate to have Stacey as our facilitator as we prepare the initial report.

In addition to our overview of the charter, our focus group has worked on some charter issues that have surfaced as requiring further study and possible inclusion in a list of proposed charter revisions.

1. **Parks District** The possibility of the establishment of a Parks District that would include Playland. Should the District be established? Should Playland just be put back into the Parks designation? Should the Playland Commission be reestablished? Should it continue to be under the Board of Legislators' authority? How much should the County Executive accomplish on his own with regard to the proposals for redesign of Playland. Now that Playland has been ravaged by *Hurricane Sandy*, maybe we should wait until we see how much FEMA will be taking care of... What about the skating rink and the leagues that use it? Our informal conversations with elected officials have netted many suggestions big and small. One suggestion was that no matter what becomes of the structure and ownership of Playland, the beach dog park must remain. With Westchester County Medical Center, we just contract with them to provide some services. Would that be a viable alternative for Playland?
2. **Confirmation of Appointments** The process for the Confirmation of Appointments. As of now, the charter provides that the County Ex appoints and the Board of Legislators confirms. Yet, there are more steps in the process to be addressed. Should appointees act in absence of confirmation? Should

there be a time limit in which to confirm or deny? Should there be set terms for all appointees or just some?

3. **Relationship Between the County Executive and the Board of Legislators**  
We discussed with former county attorneys the somewhat rocky present relationship between the executive branch and the legislative branch of county government and their suggestions for ameliorating this. We will address those suggestions in our report.
4. **Former Commission's Recommendations** We have been reviewing the Charter and Codes-type recommendations made by the former Charter Revision Commission of 1988 and whether they should be resubmitted.
5. **The Role of the County Attorney** Although each former county attorney we interviewed felt that the County Attorney is the attorney for the county and not for only one branch of county government, our focus group might want to recommend providing for separate attorneys for each branch of government. Since there have been time when conflicts arise that make it impossible for the county attorney to adequately advise everyone.
6. Our recommendations will be submitted to the full commission for discussion and possible inclusion in the final report.

Originally, Florence had agreed to have the draft of the preliminary report done by the end of this month, but Stacey thought that it was not due until the end of December. Once this is checked, Florence will have the report submitted when it is due. If there are any dissenting opinions among our focus group members, they would have the option of writing a dissenting report.

Focus Group meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

*Florence McCue*