

DRAFT RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Board, recognizing the desirability of a review of the Charter of the City of Newton, assigned to its Legislation Committee a study of the Charter and the task of evoking community reaction to possible changes in the Charter, and

WHEREAS, the Legislation Committee of this Board has been engaged for nearly six months in a study of the Charter and in an effort to determine the desires of the community with respect to possible changes in the Charter, and, more, particularly, with respect to the changes suggested in H.R. No. 2876, pending before the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth, and

WHEREAS, the Legislation Committee has filed a report to this Board which has been the subject matter of a special meeting of the full Board,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that

I. The report of the Legislation Committee is hereby accepted and approved.

II. Copies of this resolution and the report of the Legislation Committee be forwarded to the General Court and particularly to the representatives of the City in the General Court as setting forth the present views and positions of the Board.

III. While some changes in the Charter appear to be indicated, it does not appear to be desirable to make any changes in the Charter at the present time for the following reasons:

A. An adequate review of the Charter will require the expenditure of considerably more time than has thus far been possible.

B. A more thorough exploration of the possible effects of changes in the Charter is required and should be made through an analysis of other communities and the effectiveness of the provisions of their Charters and through consultation with municipal law experts at academic institutions.

C. There seems to be no overwhelming community support and certainly no consensus, at the present time, favoring significant changes in the Charter.

D. There is, at the present time, strong opposition within the community to the specific changes proposed in H.R. 2876, and particularly to -

1. Quadrennial elections.
2. A reduction in the size of the Board of Aldermen.
3. A change in the proportion of ward aldermen to aldermen-at-large on the Board of Aldermen.
4. A Charter Amendment providing for any salary to members of the Board of Aldermen.
5. The holding of preliminary elections.

E. The League of Women Voters of Newton, a rigorously non-partisan, well-respected organization, composed of intelligent, diligent, conscientious and dedicated women has recently voted to study the Charter of the City as its study project for its new organizational year which has just begun and it is the sense of the Board that such study will produce significant information and help to evoke community interest and reaction.

F. That other interested organizations and individuals have expressed a desire for an opportunity to more thoroughly review and analyze the Charter than time has thus far permitted.

G. That the philosophy of the General Court, as evidenced by the proposed Home Rule Amendment to the Constitution which will appear on the ballot in November, requires at a minimum a community consensus to any change in election procedures, and we have found no such community consensus on major changes.

H. That, as to the limited number of changes that appear to have widespread community support at the moment, it would be unwise to suggest that such changes be made without further consideration of other possible changes which might well be interdependent and interrelated.