

# Update from Amherst Charter Commission

**Andy Churchill\*, Chair**

**Tom Fricke**

**Meg Gage\***

**Nick Grabbe, Clerk**

**Mandi Jo Hanneke\*, Vice Chair**

**Irv Rhodes\***

**Julia Rueschemeyer\***

**Diana Stein\***

**Gerry Weiss\***

**\*Town Meeting members**

# Summary

- **Great deal of input on values/attributes of good local govt.**
- **Entering deliberative phase – mapping values to structure**
- **This is an iterative process**
- **We will continue to reach out to the community as proposals get more concrete**
- **Draft charter document (by July 31, 2017)**
- **Get feedback from community, Atty. General, etc.**
- **Produce final charter document (by Sept. 29, 2017)**
- **Communicate to community about it**

# Gathered Input from Over 250 People

- **1 Public Hearing: 37 speakers, approximately 65 attendees**
- **6 Listening Workshops: approximately 72 participants**
- **27 comments via email on process by 7 individuals**
- **38 comments by email on substance by 24 individuals**
- **10 handwritten comment forms during spring Town Meeting and Public Hearing**
- **33 comments submitted via electronic form: 11 anonymous, the rest by 15 separate individuals**
- **Public Comment at Commission meetings: approximately 20 different people**
- **Comments at Block Party and First Day: 60+ individuals**

# Gathered Input from Over 250 People

- **Previous charter commission members**
- **Town managers – acting and former**
- **Select Board members**
- **Town Meeting moderators and TMCC representatives**
- **Town business representatives**
- **Planning/zoning/inspections officials**
- **Public safety and public works officials**

## Identified Some Key Values:

- **Citizen participation and involvement** (from voting to policy-making)
- **A clear voice for Amherst** (e.g., with UMass and colleges)
- **Representativeness** (demographics and interests)
- **Effective, deliberative, and efficient structures, roles, and processes** (within the government and with residents)
- **Accountability and transparency**
- **A culture of tolerance and respect**
- **Able to address key challenges and craft future direction**
- **Avoid big-money politics**

# Mapping Values Onto Charter Components:

**Legislative Branch** (Town Meeting or Council)

**Executive Branch** (Select Board & Manager, Mayor, or Manager)

**Other Elected Officials** (e.g., School Committee)

**Administrative Organization** (e.g., Departments, Boards, Committees)

**Financial Policies and Procedures** (e.g., Budget)

**Elections** (Requirements, Procedures)

**Citizen Participation/Relief** (e.g., Petitions, Recalls)

**Transition Provisions**



# Keep in Touch!

- **Website:** [www.amherstma.gov](http://www.amherstma.gov) – click on Boards and Committees, click on Charter Commission
  - ✓ Sign up for weekly email update
  - ✓ Complete online input form
  - ✓ Link to agendas, minutes, videotaped sessions, comments from public
  - ✓ See charter workplan and drafts as developed
- **Facebook:** Amherst Charter Commission
- **Email us:** [charter@amherstma.gov](mailto:charter@amherstma.gov)
- **Meetings:** in Police Station Community Room