Amherst Charter Commission Members:

Andrew 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
Foundational document of a city or town government

Some consider it the Constitution of a municipality

Municipalities also have bylaws or ordinances, which are subordinate to the charter
Timeline

March 29, 2016: Charter Commission elected

October, 2016: Collins Center began working with us

July 31, 2016: Preliminary report to state and community

September 29, 2016: Final report to state and community

March 27, 2018: Voters decide whether to adopt new form or stay with current form
Public Input

- 37 Commission meetings to date
- 11 other hearings, workshops, feedback sessions
- 150+ in-person comments
- 340+ written comments
- Website: amherstma.gov (click on Boards & Committees)
- Email: charter@amherstma.gov
Values Gathered from Public Input

• Citizen participation
• A clear voice for Amherst
• Representativeness (demographics and interests)
• Effective, deliberative, and efficient structures
• Accountability and transparency
• A culture of tolerance and respect
• Strategic and long-term planning
• Avoid big-money politics
**Major Decisions: Legislative and Executive**

**Town**
(legislative branch is town meeting)
- Open Town Meeting
  (all registered voters eligible to be town meeting members)
- Representative Town Meeting
  (town meeting members are elected)

**City**
(legislative branch is a council)
- Mayoral Form
  (elected mayor leads executive branch)
- Council-Manager Form
  (appointed manager leads executive branch)

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<th>Legislative</th>
<th>Executive</th>
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<tr>
<td>Open Town Meeting</td>
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<td>Representative Town Meeting</td>
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*Note that a town may continue to call itself a town, despite taking a city form. Approximately 20 Massachusetts cities are still called towns.*
December 19th

• 5-4 vote for council form of government
• 6-3 vote for mayor vs. manager as executive

April 6th

• 5-4 vote for mayor, administrator reporting to mayor, and 60-person council

April 24th

• 5-4 vote for mayor, administrator reporting to mayor, and 13-member council
Residents

Full-time

Mayor

Council (13 members)

Committees

Manager

Town Administrator

Budget

Town Spokeswoman

Hires, fires, supervises

Depts Heads

A. Irv
Key Elements

• Mayor directly elected by voters
• Chief Administrative Officer, reporting to Mayor
• Council with 10 district reps and 3 at-large reps
• Neighborhood meetings with councilors, open to all
• Annual public forums on budget, master plan, schools
• Annual state-of-the-town address
• Citizen petition, initiative, veto, recall of officials
• Resident engagement officer
• Public campaign supports, to reduce barriers to running