

# 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**

# What is a Charter?

**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, 2017: Preliminary report to state and community**

**September 29, 2017: Final report to state and community**

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

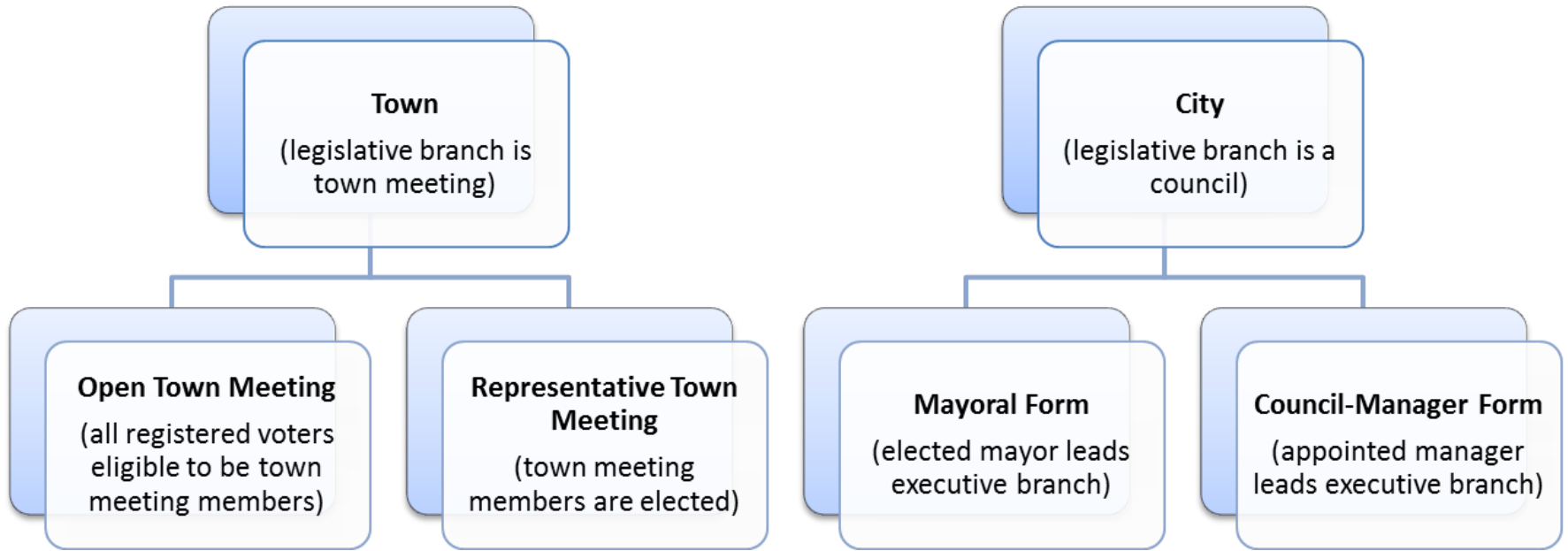
# Public Input

- **37 Commission meetings to date**
- **11 other hearings, workshops, feedback sessions**
- **150+ in-person comments**
- **340+ written comments**
- **Website: [amherstma.gov](http://amherstma.gov) (click on Boards & Committees)**
- **Email: [charter@amherstma.gov](mailto: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



		Executive	
		Appointed Manager	Elected Mayor
Legislative	Open Town Meeting	Town form	
	Representative Town Meeting	Town form	
	Council	City* form	City* form

*\*Note that a town may continue to call itself a town, despite taking a city form. Approximately 20 Massachusetts cities are still called towns.*

# Votes to Date

## **December 19<sup>th</sup>**

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

## **April 6<sup>th</sup>**

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

## **April 24<sup>th</sup>**

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

(A) IIII  
Trv

Residents

Full-time

MAYOR

Council (13 members)

hires + fires  
↓

Town Spokeswoman  
Budget

Bylaws  
Approve budget

Committees

Manager / Town Administrator

Hire, fire  
supervise

Dept Heads



# 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**
- **Citizen boards and committees**
- **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**