

Charlestown Town Charter Amendment - Planning Commission Terms & Elections

Article LIII Planning Commission

§ C-172 Establishment and organization; ~~compensation~~ composition.

A. There shall be a Planning Commission composed of five (5) members. They shall be elected at large on a nonpartisan basis for terms of ~~six (6) years~~ four (4) years, except that the initial elections after the effective date of this provision shall be for a terms of ~~two (2) members~~ the (1) candidate with the second highest number of votes for two (2) years, ~~two (2) members~~ and the (1) candidate with the highest number of votes for four (4) years. Thereafter, the terms of candidates shall be for four (4) years, with staggered terms of three (3) members in one election cycle and two (2) members in the subsequent election cycle and one (1) member for six (6) years, respectively. In addition, there shall be two (2) alternate members elected for terms of two (2) years; and any vacancy on the Commission shall be filled by one (1) of the alternates until the next general election. When an alternate resigns or is appointed to fill a vacancy on the Commission, the Council may appoint a replacement alternate to serve until the next general election. All members shall serve until their respective successors have been elected. The Town Administrator and the Director of Public Works shall serve as ex officio members, and a member of the Council may also serve as an ex officio member of this Commission.

What are voters being asked to decide?

Whether to change the **length and structure of terms** for members of the Planning Commission.

Current Charter Structure

- Planning Commission has **5 elected full members who serve for 6-year terms**
- Terms are staggered
- **Two (2) alternate members who serve 2-year terms**
- Vacancies are filled by alternates until the next election

Proposed Change

The amendment would:

- Maintain **5 elected full members** and **2 alternates (2-year terms)**
 - Change full member terms from **6 years to 4 years**
 - Establish a new staggered system:
 - **3 full members elected in one cycle**
 - **2 full members elected in the next cycle**
 - Provide a transition plan after adoption:
 - One full member initially serves a **2-year term**
 - One full member serves a **4-year term**
 - All future full terms are **4 years**
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What Stays the Same

- ✓ Commission structure (5 members + 2 alternates)
- ✓ At-large, nonpartisan elections
- ✓ Alternates fill vacancies until the next election
- ✓ Ex officio members (Town Administrator, Director of Public Works, and optional Council member)