

## HALLOWELL CHARTER COMMISSION

On February 9, 2015 the Hallowell City Council approved an Order directing the establishment of a Charter Commission. The purpose of the Charter Commission is to make recommendations as to possible revisions to the Hallowell Charter subject to approval by the voters. The Charter Commission was approved by the voters at an election on June 9, 2015. The City Council appointed three members of the Commission, Stephen Langsdorf, David Bustin and Eric Perry.

Additional members were elected to represent each ward in the City on November 2, 2015. Representing Ward 1 - Maureen Aucoin, Ward 2 - Christy Cross, Ward 3 - Richard Dolby, Ward 4 - Robert McIntire, and Ward 5 - Scott Cowger. The Commission had its organizational meeting on November 30, 2015. Stephen Langsdorf was elected as Chair. The Commission met on January 13 and February 10, 2016 to discuss its process for moving forward, perform an initial review of the Charter and to establish a schedule to complete the process that would ensure the revised Charter appears on the November 8, 2016 ballot.

The Charter Commission is considering changes to a number of sections of the Charter and is seeking public input from the Citizens of Hallowell. The Commission has scheduled a workshop with the present and former City Councilors and Mayors at 6:00 p.m. on March 9, 2016 in the City Hall Auditorium. Subjects to be discussed include the number of councilors, the number and size of wards, at-large councilors, length of terms (should councilors have three year staggered terms, rather than two year terms to avoid excessive turnover?), frequency of council meetings (is one meeting a month enough?), powers and duties of the Mayor and Council and compensation of the Mayor and Council. A public hearing on these topics will follow at 7:00 p.m.

The Commission will then meet on April 13, 2016 to work on preliminary revisions to the Charter. On May 11, 2016 the Commission has scheduled a workshop with the Clerk's office, Treasurer, Assessors and School Department to discuss several issues, including, the annual appointment process (which city officials should be appointed and the terms, in response to concern about employees who report to the City Manager who are still subject to reappointment by the Council each year), potential limits on council bond authority and/or requiring a referendum approving bonding over a certain amount, elections, schools, recall of city officials (does not exist in Hallowell Charter), initiative/referendum, assessment of taxes, code of ethics, and any other matters which the Citizens would like to address regarding the Charter. A public hearing on these topics will follow at 7:00 p.m.

The Commission will meet to continue its work on June 8 and July 13, 2016 to finalize a preliminary draft. A public hearing will be held on August 10, 2016 to review the draft Charter and seek input. The final Charter Commission meeting will be held on September 7, 2016 to approve the Charter Commission's final report and the proposed revised Charter. On September 12, 2016 there will be a presentation to the City Council so that the revised Charter can appear on the ballot for the November 8, 2016 general election. All meetings of the Charter Commission are open to the public. Additional information about the Commission is available on the City website <http://www.hallowell.govoffice.com/> or <https://www.facebook.com/HallowellCharter>