

**HOLMDEL CHARTER STUDY COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2022
7:00 PM
CONDUCTED ON A VIRTUAL BASIS VIA ZOOM**

Call to Order

Open Public Meetings Act Notice

I hereby announce that pursuant to Section 5 of the Open Public Meetings Act that adequate notice of this meeting has been provided in the notice, which was sent to the Asbury Park Press, the Two River Times, and posted on the bulletin board in Township Hall and filed in the Township Clerk's Office on December 28, 2021.

Roll Call

Chairman Kin Gee, Vice Chairman William D. Kastning, Commissioners Janet M. Berk, Gerald Buffalino, Zachary Gilstein and Special Council Kevin Starkey were present.

Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence

Chairman Gee: Can you please stand for the pledge of allegiance and remain standing for a moment of silence to honor our troops both here and abroad that work tirelessly to protect us each and every day.

Chairman Gee: Before I begin, I'd like to read an opening statement. Since the beginning of the year, like other Holmdel public bodies, this Charter Study Commission has been holding its meetings on a virtual basis via zoom due to the surge of Covid cases. Recently, we have seen that the surge of Covid cases has eased and there's been some relaxing of Covid rules. As a result, some public bodies have returned to conducting meetings on an in-person basis. We're at a stage where all our meetings involved guest speakers, most of whom are from out of town. As an example, Ed Sasdelli from the New Jersey Division of Local Government Services and a speaker at our last meeting, lives more than 100 miles from Holmdel. Many guest speakers have expressed a strong preference to come before the Commission on a virtual basis. The commission would like to return to in-person meetings, however we also recognize the value and the benefit of hearing from the expert speakers and the desire for some of them to come before the Commission on a virtual basis, so the Commission is an independent statutory body, and accordingly, we'll make the decision based on the best interest to accomplish a statutory mandate. Therefore, we will evaluate the situation and will return to in-person meetings when we feel it is appropriate, but regardless of where the meetings are conducted, on a virtual or in-person basis, the Commission has and will continue to comply with the open public meetings act where the public can hear and watch the proceedings of our meetings.

Approval of Minutes for the January 13, 2022 Meeting

Chairman Gee asked for a motion to approve the minutes for the January 13th meeting. Commissioner Berk offered a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Kastning. A voice vote confirmed all in favor.

Presentation on the Forms of Local Government: Alan Zalkind, Director, Center for Government Services, Rutgers University, Division of Continuing Studies

Chairman Gee: Our next agenda item is the presentation on the forms of local government, but before I introduce the speaker, I would like to give a summary of our Phase I. Since the beginning of our process, we indicated that our charge is to study our current form of local government and to consider improvements to the present charter or possibly a new charter. We also indicated that it is possible to believe that the current government is working well, but there may be improvements to make it even better. Our plan is divided into three phases: the first phase is the study of our current form of local government, the second phase is to explore alternative forms of local government, the third and final phase is to deliberate and make decisions for any recommendations. We spent most of our time in January and February gathering input as part of the phase to study the current form of government and we are at the end of that phase. Thus far, the Commission has interviewed seven elected officials that have served on a collective basis for more than 60 years on the township committee, including more than 20 years as mayor. They include current Mayor Greg Buontempo, former Holmdel Mayors Eric Hines and Larry Fink, former Holmdel Deputy Mayor Mike Nicholas, former Colts Neck Mayor Roseanne Scotti, former Millstone Mayor Nancy Grbelja and former Hazlet Committeeman Scott Broschard. Six of those elected officials are Republican and one is a Democrat. We also spoke with former Holmdel Township Administrator Cherron Rountree. In addition, we invited the respective chairperson of the Holmdel Republican County Committee and the Holmdel Democratic County Committee. Only Barbara Singer, the chairperson of the Holmdel Democratic County Committee, accepted our invitation and we spoke with her as well.

Those discussions were guided by a series of detailed and comprehensive questions that cover various characteristics of the township committee form of government. In addition, the commission held a public hearing to receive comments from the public. As we transition to our second phase, it's worthwhile to summarize what we have heard from those discussions with elected officials and comments received at the public hearing, but I want to be clear that this is a summary of what we heard in Phase One of our work; it is not the Commission's recommendations, which we will deliberate and decide later on in Phase III. There was consensus on some of the characteristics of our current form of government; where appropriate I've included a few specific comments or quotes from our guest speakers. The comments are not intended to be comprehensive, but just to give some color to the subject.

Under our current form of government, the five members of the township committee choose the mayor at the reorganization meeting in January of each year, the mayor then serves a one-year term and the process is repeated in the following year. The comments we received indicate a strong support for the mayor to be elected directly by Holmdel residents rather than by members of the township committee. As an example, Mayor Greg Buontempo said, "Our current system has led to chaos and confusion in Holmdel, especially when an individual gets re-elected to the township committee, but then is not re-elected as mayor. That exact controversy happened during my first election as mayor in 2017." He went on to say, "The TC system also means that the mayor is picked in a closed process where the township committee is all one political party. The mayor is often picked at a political caucus where the political party makes the decision, not the people. I don't see how this is good for democracy."

Former Deputy Mayor Mike Nicholas said, "We should let the people vote on who the mayor is, who the figurehead is. It shouldn't be done behind closed doors. I think that really is disenfranchising the entire town of Holmdel. The residents should say who's in charge, it shouldn't be done in some political caucus or meeting." Former Colts Neck Mayor Roseanne Scotti stated that she favors a directly-elected mayor because when the mayor is directly

elected, hopefully you get an individual that's not going to close off the public, who's not going to do things that they're not supposed to do.

Under the current form of government, elections are held every year with a primary in the spring and the general election in November; elections are on a staggered basis with no more than two committee persons running each year. On the frequency of election cycles, most of the comments we received were in support of not more frequently than every two years with support on a staggered basis to keep the local government fresh and to have more public engagement. Former Holmdel Mayor Larry Frank said, "By having an election every year, it does give voters a chance to express their satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the governing body or at least with members whose terms are up, and that's a good thing. It also maintains relative stability on the government body while allowing for gradual changes because only two seats or one seat at a time are up for election, so the makeup of the government body changes gradually rather than suddenly which allows for some continuity."

Under the current form of government, the number of committee members is fixed at five. On the subject number of members of the government body, there was no strong consensus, but most thought five or seven appears to be the right number.

Under the current form of government, elections are held on a partisan basis meaning candidates run under party affiliations. The commission heard many comments in support of nonpartisan elections similar to the Board of Ed elections. Current Holmdel Mayor Greg Buontempo said that he is a long-time Republican, but that there are no issues that are made at the local level that has anything to do with the federal level. Locally, residents are concerned about the quality of life in Holmdel, therefore local elections should be about who's going to get things done for the town and not about party affiliations. Former Holmdel Deputy Mike Nicholas said, "All politics are local, but the divisiveness and partisanship in this town have been out of control." He doesn't believe that at the local level tying oneself to national politics helped the town in any way and that a nonpartisan election is about the people of Holmdel dictating their own destiny and their own future. Finally, as a former member of the local Holmdel County Committee, he quoted the local Republican chair saying, "The local county committee has no authority on who are the candidates, that is up to the county chair," meaning the Monmouth County chair. He ended up by saying, "I don't know if Holmdel residents know that. I believe most of them don't understand. It's kind of confusing and I don't believe that that's the way for Holmdel to move forward." Former Millstone Mayor Nancy Grbelja said that nonpartisan elections give people an opportunity to look at candidates and to really question who it is that they are voting for. She indicated that too often voters rely on the line and that allows party bosses from outside the local towns to favor their candidate rather than candidates that may be supported by the local committee and that is hurting a lot of communities in Monmouth County.

There is a minority opinion expressed by former Holmdel Mayor Eric Hinds. He said that in the United States the vast majority is two-party rule and generally people are like-minded on one side or the other. He thinks it's comforting for a lot of voters to know that they could count on party to elect a candidate in line with their line of thinking and he would not be in favor of nonpartisan elections.

We also note that members of the public that spoke at the public hearing were in favor of nonpartisan elections. There was a minority opinion expressed during a public comment session at the end of one meeting that "it would be hard to know who to vote for if there were no party affiliation."

Under the current form of government committee members are voted on an at-large basis. On the subject of at-large elections versus elections by wards, most comments were in support of at-large elections and not by wards.

Under the current form of government, initiative and referendum by petition generally are not allowed. On this subject, most of those interviewed thought that initiative and referendum by petition would be valuable. Former Holmdel Mayor Eric Hinds said that "I think it's power to the people." He went on to say that "I do think it's a good thing. I think that the government is for the people." Former Holmdel Deputy Mayor Mike Nicholas said, "The more voters and residents have a say in issues, the better, I think that the people are ultimately the elected officials' bosses and the more power, the more say that they have in any initiative, in any issue in town, the better." Former Mayor Roseanne Scottie from Colts Neck said that "I always like initiative or referendum" and that "I think also that it behooves the township committee when there's an issue that is so divisive and public and they're going one way, but they see a lot of opposition, I think they have a duty to put something to referendum."

Almost all the comments we saw with our public hearing on February 3rd echo the above sentiments. With that, I'd like to see if any other commissioners have anything that they'd like to add.

There were no further comments.

Chairman Gee: We have a great treat for us, a presentation on the forms of local government by Alan Zalkind and Kathy Cupano. Mr. Zalkind is currently the Director of Rutgers University's Center for Government Services, a position that he has held since 2009. In addition, he is the Principal at Cambridge Management Associates, LLC, a management consulting firm established back in 1995 to provide technical assistance to public sector and non-profit organizations. He has provided consulting services to the National League of Cities, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and has served as a member of the National Association of Counties (NACO), Human Services Steering Committee, for six years. He has provided management consultant services to numerous counties, cities and non-profit organizations in New Jersey. He also served as executive director for New Jersey's Municipal Management Association which represents 250 municipal managers in New Jersey. His responsibilities include professional development and training for the members, the growth of the association, and relationships with other professional groups that are responsible for municipal services. Mr. Zalkind was an associate professor with the Graduate Department of Public Administration for Rutgers University. He was director of the MPA and executive MPA programs responsible for graduate programs in public administration for government and non-profit managers. He holds a BA in English and Political Science, an MA in Political Science and an MPA in Massive Philosophy, all earned at New York University. He is a certified correctional healthcare professional and a certified mediator.

Along with Mr. Zalkind is Kathy Cupano, who is the former Assistant Director of Rutgers Center for Government Services and has worked alongside a former Rutgers Professor with the Asbury Park Charter Study commission in 2013 and several other Charter Study Commissions. In addition, she was a Councilperson in New Brunswick and a Middlesex County Freeholder. Welcome and thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to be with us.

Mr. Zalkind: Thank you for the introduction. Let me just say by way of introduction, there's no perfect answer to your question. Every form of government, and there are 12 forms, has some

successes and a few failures. It reduces itself to the people that serve in the government, not necessarily the form of the government, but who gets to serve in those positions. Historically, there's been a movement away from legislative control to executive control, the public is looking for more and more accountability. It is easier to ascribe accountability to a mayor or to a manager than to a group of council people, 5, 7 or 9, so to that extent the questions that you've raised before my presentation are exactly the right questions, and what the end point of my discussion will be. We don't have the answers to your question, we can just guide you with what other towns have done and then Holmdel can pick and decide what is best for them. With that, let me begin my presentation.

Again, this is a little tedious; it'll take me about 10 minutes and some of the information clearly you already know. A summary of presentation is: key points, forms of government, variations and plans, how change in government occurs, descriptions and differences by form of government, we select seven because Holmdel can become one of seven different kinds of government, then analysis for the forms of government and conclusions. So, that's the presentation.

Key points: there are 12 forms of local government currently in New Jersey, importantly and significantly different, there are three types of structures, not forms but types. You have an elected legislature/elected executive, there are 341 of those which include mayor/council, mayor/council/administrator and small municipality. These forms of government serve with a directly elected chief executive. The second form of government is your elected legislative/appointed executive, and there are 52 forms of those. These include the council/manager form of government and your special charter. In this case, like what you were doing, the governing body appoints a chief executive not the general electorate, the legislative people appoint the chief executive. The third form of government is your elected legislature/executives which includes the township committee, the village and the commission. In this form of government, the governing body serves as both chief executive and the legislative body. There is no mayor. So, your form of government is significant, because the types of governments are significant and probably more important than the forms of government.

There are three key historical periods with relation to forms of government, pre-1950, optional municipal charter law in 1950 and amendments to the optional municipal charter law in 1981. In all cases, there's been a movement from legislative control to executive control. Public preference for directly elected mayor rather than infuse responsibilities among legislators. So, what you mentioned in your remarks really does reflect the historical sentiment about what has occurred in the state. Changes in forms of government are related to increasing complexity and diversity of public sector services. Government is asked to do more and more and more and in that context the public wants to hold certain people accountable for the services, not a body of people, not a committee of people. In summary, we have more boroughs and townships than any other forms of government. We have 565 forms of government, we have over 350 forms of government that are either boroughs or townships, and what does exist and what remains and will continue to remain irrespective of the form that you pick is there's an existing tension between state oversight control and your home rule philosophy. So, irrespective of the form that you pick, the state will always determine, to a large extent, what you can and cannot do.

Chairman Gee: You mentioned that there are more boroughs and townships than any other form.

Mr. Zalkind: Yes.

Chairman Gee: The previous point is that the pre-historical period, where you have pre-1950, from 1798 to 1890, so is it fair to say that a lot of the boroughs and townships are because of historical reasons because they've been around 200 years as opposed to some of the more modern forms that may have been around post 1950?

Mr. Zalkind: That is correct.

Chairman Gee: So, the mere fact that they are large in number by itself is a more historical reason than something else.

Mr. Zalkind: Yes. Forms of government, this is just an elaboration of the prior slide, elected legislature/elected executive includes cities, towns, boroughs, mayor/council and small municipality and mayor/council/administrator. What's asterisked are the ones that have been permitted and allowed by the optional municipal charter law, so that's what distinguishes why they have the asterisks and the others don't. City has an elective governing body and elected chief executive, town has an elected governing body and elected chief executive, borough has an elected governing body and elected chief executive, mayor/council has an elected governing body and elected chief executive, small municipality has an elected governing body and elected chief executive if not selected by the council. Mayor/council/administrator, once again, represents the other five forms, elected governing body and elected chief executive. That's why these fall under the first form elected legislature/elected executive. Second form of government, elected legislature and appointed executive, include the council/manager and municipal manager. The first case, the council/manager has an elected governing body and appointed chief executive. Municipal manager has an elected governing body and appoint the chief executive and this really predated or preceded the municipal charter law because this form of government was created in 1923. Finally, the third form of government, elected legislature executives which includes commissions, villages and townships where the elected body serves as the administrators and there's no mayor, there's no manager.

Commissioner Gilstein: On council/manager, or maybe it's true of municipal manager as well, as I understand it there is a mayor, the mayor is not separate from the governing body, but there is a mayor who, isn't it true, could be elected directly?

Mr. Zalkind: I have the seven forms elaborated in later slides, could you hold the question until we reach that point and then raise the question again?

Commissioner Gilstein: Okay.

Mr. Zalkind: Again, forms of government: townships (1798), cities (1880's-1890's), towns (1880's-1890's), boroughs (1880's-1890's), villages (1880's-1890's), commissions (1911) municipal manager (1923), special charter (renewed in 1947) and then the optional municipal charter law in 1950.

The optional municipal charter law includes all optional forms that could be adopted by any municipality. You have to have an ordinance creating an administrative code and the code essentially is the bible by which the town operates, by which powers are invested in various officials. Initiative and referendum are all part of these forms of government; the forms can be changed through a referendum including these things that are involved, the critical variables for what differentiates these towns. Council size, whether it's a partisan or a nonpartisan election, whether there are wards or no wards, and whether the terms of reelected officials are staggered

or concurrent. So, these four or five variables really determine what forms the government can select. If you pick a form of government, you have to wait three to five years before you change to another form, and the five forms of government that exist under the Optional Municipal Charter Law are mayor/council, council/manager, small municipality, special charter.

It was an amendment to the municipal charter law in 1981 where the mayor/council/administrator form was created and expanded some forms available to government. If you look at the bottom of the slide, all the options referring to these options include size of the council, whether it's partisan or nonpartisan, at large or at ward elections, or concurrent or staggered terms, so all of these options refer to these four points.

Variations in Plan: whether the jurisdiction is governed by legislators exclusively or by a combination of legislators and executive, the number of elected officials is a key difference, the terms of office for elected officials is a key difference, whether the terms are staggered or concurrent, whether the elected officials serve at large or represent wards or whether the local elections are non-partisan. I'm redundant, I keep repeating these concepts because these concepts are replete throughout the charter law and the choices that you have available to you in Holmdel include these five critical choices.

How does a change in government occur? It can be a direct petition by registered voters, it could be adoption of an ordinance by existing governing body or charter study commission, which you are. There were 286 charter change requests made from 1951 to 2015, most of which were related to whether there should be partisan or nonpartisan elections, not the form of government, which is whether these the municipalities or towns should be partisan or nonpartisan.

The next section has to do with differences and descriptions. Holmdel can become a commission form of government, council/manager.

Commissioner Gilstein: You quoted a number just now, 286 charter change requests since 1951 based on partisan versus nonpartisan.

Mr. Zalkind: No, the change requests that were made and most were related to partisan versus non-partisan elections. The reason that they changed included whether to be partisan or not, whether it be a different form of government.

Commissioner Gilstein: So, were all of those under the optional municipal charter law then?

Mr., Zalkind: Yes.

Commissioner Gilstein: Do you know if they were all changed?

Mr., Zalkind: No, some were changed, some failed and some succeeded. I don't remember the percentage, but they were not all successful.

Commissioner Gilstein: What year does that come up to, current year 2022 or up to 2015?

Mr. Zalkind: That's my latest information, 2015, and the reason I cite that is because this is not contemporary information. We're at least seven years old and what's happened since 2016 I have not included in this presentation okay.

Back to the form that you can become, commission, council/manager, mayor/council, mayor/council/administrator, municipal manager, township. You cannot become a town, you cannot become a borough, you cannot become a city.

Chairman Gee: When you say those that are in bold with an asterisk, they are available forms for adoption, you don't mean currently by this charter study commission, you mean that those were by the voters. So, for example, I know that the municipal manager you would have to petition pursuant to the 1923 Municipal Manager Act. Right now, the process that we're going through is that this charter study commission, in fact, was formed by ordinance under the Faulkner Act, and so that the Municipal Manager and commission would not be available to us. Township, in theory, could be because obviously we recommend no changes and we remain at a township form, is that correct?

Mr. Zalkind: Yes. This is the commission form of government; this is one of the seven I've alluded to in the prior slide. Three or five commissioners determined by population and the key here is 12,000 people or less you're a small city. If you're more than 12 000 people you fit into another form of government. You can be a commission, as a small city or as a larger city. Elections are at large and nonpartisan, four-year concurrent terms. The mayor is elected by the board of commissioners for a four-year term and he or she is not elected directly by the people. The mayor presides over the board of commissioners, but does not have veto power. The board of commissioners exercise legislative power over the municipality and each commissioner has executive function as the director of assigned departments. There's no single chief executive, so someone's in charge of public works, someone's in charge of police, someone is in charge of something else and that's what the commissioners do. There is no mayor, so the commissioners essentially serve as super department heads.

Council/manager - 49 municipalities, option of partisan and nonpartisan, depending upon size five, seven or nine members. Council terms are for four years, they run concurrently or staggered every two years as an election. They're elected at large or a combination of at large and ward representatives. If there are wards there are staggered elections. So, if you happen to be a council/manager form of government, you could be either at large or at wards, but if you're at wards the elections are staggered. Council tasks are limited to legislative duties. Council appoints the manager, the municipal clerk and the tax assessor. The mayor is directly elected by the voters or selected by the council, , four-year term if elected by voters, two or four years if selected by council. Critically here, your manager is the chief executive and appoints all subordinate personnel. So, the person running the city, and this goes back to my earlier point where accountability is central and critical to how voters think, the manager is the chief executive, so if you're mad at somebody you'll run to your manager and you complain, not to the mayor, not to the council. You can do that but the manager is held accountable for the day-to-day functions of the government.

Commissioner Gilstein: This states that it does have a mayor and the mayor can be directly elected.

Mr. Zalkind: Yes, that's a choice and there's also the option that the mayor is selected by the elected officials.

Commissioner Gilstein: You mentioned that if you're mad, you're mad at the manager, but the people don't elect the manager, the manager is appointed by the council, I believe.

Mr. Zalkind: Right, but if someone complains about the manager to the council, then the council or the mayor calls a manager and says what the hell is happening here, you're the one who's running the department and we expect you to make sure a remedy is applied.

Mayor/council – 71 municipalities. Mayor has a four-year term and five, seven or nine council members that could be four-year term concurrent or staggered, depending upon what the township chooses. The mayor is elected separately, not chosen by legislators. The mayor is the chief executive, he or she exercises all the executive power of the municipality, has veto power over ordinances, may or may not attend council meetings, can speak but not vote at council meetings. Elections can be partisan or nonpartisan. Council members can be elected either at large or as ward representatives and the council selects the council president. You have the authority, however, to appoint your own clerk, you being the council; the mayor does not appoint the clerk. The mayor has executive authority to appoint the administrator, the attorney, the tax assessor, the treasurer, business administrator, department heads with council approval. Council serves as a legislative body limited to legislative functions. The administrator supervises the administration under the mayor because the mayor is considered the chief executive.

Mayor/council/administrator exists in only three municipalities. The elections are at large; elections are partisan. Mayor has a four-year term and presides at council meetings but votes only to break ties. Mayor has veto authority of ordinances but he or she can be overridden by a two-thirds council vote. Mayor exercises the executive powers of the municipality, enforces the charter, local ordinances. So in this case, it is the mayor and then the administrator who really have the authority to run the day-to-day business of the town. Mayor appoints the administrator, the tax assessor, the tax collector, the attorney, the clerk, the treasurer and other officers for one-year terms with the advice and consent of council that need to be renewed every year. Council is composed in this form of government of six members with three-year staggered terms with election of two members each year. Council is the legislative body with no administrative appointment powers though you do prepare the budget, you provide advice and consent for appointments, your municipal administrator administers the business affairs of the municipality and supervises all departments. So, in that case, once again, accountability resides in the hands of the municipal administrator.

Chairman Gee: Is it fair to say this looks like a borough form of government except that the administrator is required to be appointed?

Mr. Zalkind: Has to be appointed, and in this form of government the administrator has more authority than in a borough because the administrator's responsibilities are defined in the administrative code, so there's a special section in the administrative code defining and outlining the responsibilities of the manager or the administrator, what he or she can or cannot do.

Mr. Zalkind: Municipal Manager – elections are all at large and all nonpartisan. You have a council of three, five, seven or nine members, depending upon the size of the population, all serving four years in office. The terms are concurrent, however if the municipality adopting this form had stagger terms under its previous form of government it may adopt three-year staggered terms, it may change to four-year staggered terms after adoption. The mayor is elected by the council not by the electorate with duties limited to presiding and voting as a member of the council. The mayor's term of office varies depending upon the length of time between council elections. Council appoints the manager, the tax assessor, the auditor, the treasurer, the clerk and the attorney, so unlike some of the other forms of government the council makes some of the key appointments here, not the mayor. The council acts as a

legislative body, administrative duties are prohibited, however the manager is the chief executive making all additional appointments, so he or she will appoint the fire department head, police department head, public works head, health department head. So all those appointments are made by the municipal manager not the legislative body or the mayor. Manager prepares a temporary budget for council consideration. Manager, of course, like in any other form of government serves at the pleasure of the council; he or she can be removed if the council decides that he or she is not doing the appropriate job. Unlike the other forms of government initiative and referendum are not authorized.

Small municipality - there are only 18 municipalities that fit under this category, limited to jurisdictions with less than 12,000 residents. There's not much really to talk about under this category.

Special Charter - unique form of government through the enactment of the state law providing a municipality with their own special charter. There are not many of these, a few of them need some really special circumstances to become a special charter in their jurisdiction

Differences and Descriptions - township is the current form for Holmdel. You're governed by a township committee. You have, in your case, five members serving at large. You could increase or decrease the number of officials based upon a petition or referendum. You have three-year terms that are staggered with an annual election each year. Your elections, I think, are partisan according to what I read, though from what I heard you talking about you may want to go back to nonpartisan and I'm not quite clear about that. Committee as a whole exercises all formal legislative and executive power, which means you run the departments. Mayor is chosen annually by members of the township committee, presides at meetings and votes as a member. The township form of government may create a position of administrator by ordinance with delegation and managerial responsibilities.

So, this is where you are, this is a snapshot of the 565 municipalities as of 2015, and you can see the 218 and 141, borough and township represent the largest form of government that existed in 2015. You have 11 special charters, 15 cities, only 18 small cities, so this information gives you a picture of historically what New Jersey has done in terms of governance of its local jurisdictions.

Forms of Analysis - as I said, boroughs and townships are the most popular form of government representing 64% of all forms of government. Distribution by structure - elected legislators/elected executive - 341 of those include cities, towns, mayor/council, small municipality, mayor/council/administrator and eight special charters. Elected legislator-executives includes township committees, villages, boards of commissioners, 172 of those. Elected legislators with appointed executives, which includes council/manager, municipal/manager and three special charters, 52 of those. So, this is the distribution and breakdown of the 565 governments in New Jersey as of today.

Conclusions - the form of government is a means to an end, it's the structure not the product. There's no one best form of government, I said in my opening remarks that there is no form that's been destined to be the best form of government, depends upon what the voters are looking for. Ultimately, it's the individuals who occupy the office that matter, it's not the form of government. We have good and bad forms of every type of government, it is the individuals who sit in those seats that make or break the town. You want a common vision, unambiguous roles, clear understanding of authority and limits to authority, clear and effective communication among all parties, clarity between your personal and your elected roles, the ability to assess and

evaluate decisions, services and staff on a regular basis , the ability to shift direction to priorities based on changing circumstances and ultimately your reliance and confidence in your staff because they are doing the day-to-day work not the elected officials. Any questions that you might have?

Commissioner Gilstein: My questions have to do with logistics of carrying things out, so if the commission makes a recommendation and then the voters pass the recommendation to let us move to a new form of government we might recommend, how is transition handled? Does the commission design the transition plan or does state law prescribe how it is to be handled?

Mr. Zalkind: That's a really good question, I don't know. Kathy, do you know how they did it in Asbury or any other place?

Ms. Cupano: I don't, we just did the presentations on the options and they had attorneys that walked them through the subsequent phases.

Mr. Starkey: Once the question on the ballot is approved, meaning the form of government is to be changed, then at the next general election the entire six elected officials are essentially removed, there is a new slate that is elected the next election. They then take office as usual on January 1st or for a May election it will be July 1st. If it is the council with staggered terms, I believe it's drawn by lot, roughly half the council has a two-year term and the other half has a four-year term and then it gets onto tracks. That is all established by state law, it is not up to the discretion of the charter study commission or the voters, it is just in accordance with the form of government that's adopted and there is a section of the statute that's called *transition provisions* that provides for how that is to happen.

Commissioner Gilstein: If, as part of a recommendation, we had recommended that the mayor be elected at large by the voters rather than by the council or committee, do we prescribe how the election should be handled or does state law govern that? Is it the person who gets the most votes or do we just prescribe rank order voting?

Mr. Zalkind: No, once again, state law governs that, what options are available will be part of the recommendation for the question. A lot about it is whether or not there are runoff elections, but aside from that it is just straightforward, state law determines how the election is to be held.

Chairman Gee: Correct me if I'm wrong, to a large extent I think it does depend on what form of government as well. If, for example, you're in a mayor/council form of government, then you would have candidates that will run for the mayor position, so you don't decide anything, but you declare that you're running for mayor and then other candidates may run for council and if it's council/manager, that's also different. You're not talking about the transition, you're talking about an ongoing process, right?

Mr. Starkey: The answer I was intending was just that it is generally not up to the charter study commission, that's defined by state law.

Mr. Zalkind: The question that you're really exploring is really an enigma because I know you and other towns are always looking for the perfect form of government, and, as I mentioned in my remarks, there is no perfect form of government. This is a process and the process changes, where you are now might be different ten years from now. Whatever displeasure or discomfort you have with your current system, looking to change it you may find yourself in the exact same place with a different form of government. You need to examine, as a group, what

is the discontent, where does the discontent come from, what is it that you're trying to change to make it better and how will the form of government, that you select or recommend, remedy, intervene or address the questions or the issues that you're raising.

Chairman Gee: The charter study commission was established as an ordinance, then as a public question and then the voters voted on that. I think we said this a number of times where even when you believe the current government is working well, there are things that we could work to improve to make something that's working well even better. So, there's not a preconceived notion that we're trying to fix this or that and that's why when we do the process, we ask questions of the various elected officials and public comment in all the areas and took a temperature reading and we got back the results that were summarized earlier. So, with that, at least for me, I think, perhaps for the rest of the commissioners, is that we got some interesting input and that's something we'll have to go through deliberation and figure things out.

Chairman Gee asked there were any further questions and there were none.

Invited Guest: Tracy Buckley, Council President of Tinton Falls

Chairman Gee: Our next speaker is Tracy Buckley and with that let me hand this off to Commissioner Buffalino who will make the introduction and then ask a series of questions of Council President Buckley.

Commissioner Buffalino: Ms. Buckley is an accounting audit and compliance professional with 19 years of experience. She has worked extensively in external and internal audit with experience in Sarbanes-Oxley contracts, compliance and fraud investigation. Ms. Buckley has been an integral active member of our community having served as a former board member of her condo association and then ran for Tinton Falls council in 2019 and has served as council president since her term began in 2020. She's also the liaison to the Environmental Commission and Fort Monmouth Economic Revitalization Authority Board. Ms. Buckley, do you have anything else you'd like to add to that?

Council President Buckley: No, happy to be here, happy to answer all of your questions and thanks for having me.

Commissioner Buffalino: Please describe your municipality's form of government.

Council President Buckley: We are under the Faulkner Act under the mayor/council form, so one of those 71 municipalities. We have five council members which are elected all at large, we don't have wards and on a non-partisan basis and then we have a mayor who is directly elected by the representatives as well. Our terms are staggered so every two years there's local elections, one year it's the mayor and two council members and then two years later it's the other three council members.

Commissioner Buffalino: Can you provide any background or considerations that led the town to form the local government, as you just described?

Council President Buckley: Not directly, it was done in 1985, so I can only tell you what I've heard from people, but I don't have a lot of detail around that. I do know that it was done via a public referendum at that time and folks generally like this form of government as opposed to others.

Commissioner Buffalino: Can you give us an idea of what you think works best in the form of government that you have?

Council President Buckley: I will couch this by saying I think it depends on your municipality and your residents and what they want. In particular, in our form of government to have the legislative body be independent from the executive branch, I think most of us like that and I think it kind of makes sense to the residents as well. When they think of national, they think of congress and they think of an executive branch, it's sort of a microcosm of that, obviously different but it's generally similar as opposed to each individual council member, for example, being the head of a department. That being said, each community may be different with what you want, so I agree that it will vary by what you all think is best for your particular community. The at large, I can see pros and cons to both at large and wards. I personally like the at large, one reason being if you had it by wards, like in our town, there's clusters of populations, just the way the community developed over the years and the way that it grew. As you know, we're like this long rectangle, so if you have wards you want to make sure that you would have people running from every ward. I can see the benefit as well, if there's different issues in different sections of town, it may be more beneficial to have a ward form of government. I think ours works being at large in Tinton Falls.

I think the biggest thing is the partisan versus nonpartisan. I'm strongly in favor of the nonpartisan form of government and I know that our residents are, as well, for a number of reasons. One I think it just fosters collaboration amongst the different elected officials and somewhat independence. The biggest reason for me though is that if you look at our electorate, two-thirds of population is unaffiliated, they don't affiliate with either the democratic party or the republican party, they're just independent unaffiliated voters. In a nonpartisan form of government, you have a good chance of being elected because there is no line and if you have a partisan form of government and you're independent, you can certainly run and be on the ballot, but you have a much less likely chance of being elected. I'll take my own example, when I said it fosters collaboration and it puts party politics aside, when I ran for office, we were a ticket of three: one democrat, one unaffiliated and one republican. You can't do that in a partisan form of government. If you got a group of people that are active in your community, there are so many people that would be qualified to run for local government and want to be involved in their communities, but they don't necessarily like partisan politics or they might not think of themselves in that manner and I think having a nonpartisan form of government fosters that collaboration and gets more people involved in their local community.

Commissioner Buffalino: So, basically, it leads to a situation that is not as divisive as partisan politics could be, is that what you're trying to tell us?

Council President Buckley: Yes, like I said, strong feedback from the community that they like this form of government and it also, in my opinion, puts pressure on the local elected officials to collaborate with one another because they're independent. People may have affiliations, but on the local level they all have to work with one another.

Commissioner Buffalino: What's the size of the population in your town?

Council President Buckley: A little bit more than 17,000.

Commissioner Buffalino: It's roughly the same size as ours actually when you think about numbers of people. Anybody else from the commission have a question they'd like to ask at this point?

Commissioner Berk: In terms of functioning, your mayor can attend meetings, may not attend meetings, could you describe a little bit about what your mayor does in town because it's different from our mayor.

Council President Buckley: The mayor/council form states that mayor is the chief executive and he appoints the borough administrator. The borough administrator is the department head of all of the other departments. That said, though the mayor does appoint the BA, that position also needs advice and consent of the council via a simple resolution and they conduct the day-to-day business. Whereas, council members are more legislative, so ordinances and resolutions, but wouldn't get involved in the way the DPW is going about collecting garbage or trash. I will say that can lead to somewhat of confusion amongst residents, because the residents attend a council meeting where they ask the questions and we'll get questions about everything, because of all the different forms of government. If they're not familiar with that, they can ask the council member all of the questions around things that are handled by the administration, so again it fosters collaboration because we will then hand that off to the administrator or include the administrator or DPW, wherever the case may be, in that. That is why at our council meetings, the mayor does not have to attend, but the mayor usually does attend, as does the director of law, the BA and our engineering department head.

Chairman Gee: They're not required to be there, they're not part of the council, so they actually don't have to attend?

Council President Buckley: That's correct, the mayor does not have to attend, but most of the questions are for the administration at the council meetings. We field all the questions and that's why it helps to have all the professionals there.

Commissioner Buffalino: How would a bond ordinance take place under your form of government?

Council President Buckley: It would be proposed by our CFO and would be voted on by council, just like any other ordinance.

Commissioner Buffalino: Would it emanate from the administrator side of it?

Council President Buckley: Yes, typically it has from our CFO if we were to do something and need a bond ordinance.

Chairman Gee: Before you move on, just to go back to the point earlier you made about nonpartisan elections. One of the very interesting things about this is Tinton Falls made a little bit of history in recent years having elected a 93-year-old mayor who then got reelected as a 97-year-old mayor, and I just wonder if you have any comment or insight whether someone like your 93-year-old mayor would have been elected if not for nonpartisan election.

Council President Buckley: I do not know.

Chairman Gee: I'm just curious because normally it's not something, whether it's Democrat or Republican, that you would have someone at that age to be endorsed or supported by party bosses. In this case, the election is directly decided by the voters so it's not decided by any party bosses or anything like that so it's interesting. One other question related to the last topic, isn't it true that the council actually approves the budget, and also has line veto or line specific

authority, so a bond ordinance may come from the CFO, but ultimately it has to be part of that budget for the actual expenditure to be authorized, is that correct?

Council President Buckley: Yes, you're correct on all counts. Any ordinance including a bond ordinance would need to be approved by council. The council also does approve the actual budget, the budget is drafted by the CFO via open public meetings so the council can attend and listen to what each department head may request or need for the for the next year, puts together a draft budget together with the mayor, circulates it to the council members and then it gets introduced at a council meeting. From the time the council has it, they can certainly propose any amendments, ask any questions, request things prior to, like the environmental commission wants to join the composting council and we need x amount of dollars in the budget. Each department head puts in a request to be put into the budget and it just makes things flow smoothly as opposed to waiting to the last minute and making amendments. Then there's just an open collaborative question and answer period, but certainly the council does not have to approve the budget and can recommend or ask for amendments before they would go ahead and approve the budget.

Commissioner Berk: Your mayor has veto power, is that right?

Council President Buckley: Yes, that's correct, the mayor has veto power over any ordinance up to 10 days past the time that an ordinance would be passed by the council. The mayor can either veto it or do nothing and then it becomes law after that allotted time period as determined by the state. Should the mayor veto any ordinance, then the council can, by two-thirds majority in our case, override that veto. We have a tight timeframe from the time that the mayor would veto an ordinance to hold a special meeting and then potentially override the mayor's veto.

Commissioner Berk: In your experience, have things run mostly smoothly in terms of the mayor not vetoing much.

Council President Buckley: Yes, I've only been on council since 2020, so I can't talk to that much before then, but there's been times where the mayor hasn't signed the ordinance, but the mayor has not vetoed any ordinance, and part of that is we do try to collaborate with everybody so that you wouldn't have that situation. We get everyone's feedback if there's something that is complicated and we need a lot of explanation, we'll hold workshops that everyone's invited to, including the public, for a public comment period so that when we do introduce an ordinance, we think it's in a good shape so things will run smoothly.

Chairman Gee: If you send the ordinance over and the mayor does not veto and does not sign within the prescribed period, then does that by default become approved?

Council President Buckley: Yes, it becomes law after a 10- or 20-day period.

Chairman Gee: Whatever the time period, the point is that if he doesn't proactively veto, he just lets it go and that actually means that the ordinance becomes in effect.

Commissioner Buffalino: Is there anything that you can think of that you would like to see improved in your form of government?

Council President Buckley: Nothing major, the only thing for me would be the public's confusion around the form of government, because the public comes to a council meeting and would ask us questions and as a council member, I don't like having to say, "well, I don't have the power to

do that, but I'll hand this over to the administrator," because they're wanting you to do something as council and you can recommend, but you can't act on a lot of those specific things because they are handled by the administration. Again, it does foster this collaboration because you want everything to run smoothly. I would say that it's hard for me to speak only because I'm not that familiar with if this would be better in some other form of government, meaning if the form of government even impacts this, but if there's something happening at the lower level of administration that we may not know about because we're on the council on the legislative end, and we get a call from a resident, we may not know about it and you don't necessarily want to be caught unaware. So perhaps another form of government would make us more aware of those more minute things, but perhaps the form of government doesn't have anything to do with it. Overall, I do like our form of government generally speaking.

Commissioner Buffalino: Does the administrator attend the council meetings?

Council President Buckley: Yes.

Commissioner Buffalino: Do they get direct feedback from the community?

Council President Buckley: Yes, that's how it usually goes during the public comment period; the public can ask any question they want about anything. If it's not something under council, I will turn the question over to the administrator, if it's a legal question to the director of law and if it's an engineering related question to the engineering department.

Commissioner Buffalino: We understand also that your form of government, because it's a Faulkner Act form, would also contain initiative and referendum and one of the questions is, has that ever happened in your town and what was the outcome of it?

Council President Buckley: We had a referendum in 2019 whether or not we wanted to eliminate runoff elections, but that didn't go through to public petition to the council because the council listened to the residents and proposed it via ordinance, so if the council didn't want to do that then the public would have had to go through the full referendum process, but we were approached by members of the public and said, "sure we'll leave it up to the voters, I think having the voters decide on that would be fine," and so it just made the process a little bit easier. I'm honestly not sure if when the form of government was changed, how that referendum came to be, so there haven't been any others to my knowledge.

Commissioner Buffalino: What was the issue? Why did you not want the runoff election?

Council President Buckley: I guess you guys haven't really talked about timing, whether your elections are held in May or in the general election time frame in November. So, when Tinton Falls switched to this form of government and switched to nonpartisan, May to my understanding, is the normal time frame for a Faulkner Act type of election, and so it was in that May time frame, in which case that brings your runoff election to the June primary, it's usually a month after the election. At some point they changed the timing of the general election from May to November, I don't have the date on that unfortunately, it was before I moved to town. When that happened, that then changes the runoff time period to the beginning of December and so some of the rationale for asking us to put the ballot referendum there because the voter turnout in the beginning of December is very non-existent, like less than a thousand people because who's thinking about an election in December, and so the whole point is I'm very in favor of not only ranked choice voting, but runoff elections. I think it's obviously the fairest way to do it. When you have an election in May, your runoff election is going to be in June where

people already know there's a June primary because they're coming out to potentially vote, so they're generally aware even if they're not politically involved that there's usually elections in June, but when you have a general election in November no one's usually aware that there's a runoff election in December so there's a significant drop in turnout. While the idea is great, who's actually voting in December, so even if no one got a plurality and you would need a runoff election, the people who are ultimately voting are just the voters who would vote in December which could be a very small fraction of your overall voter turnout. The intent may not actually be fulfilled by having it in December. That said, if you have your full voter turnout, obviously in my opinion, runoffs are better because then the voters are getting a choice on the top two candidates.

Commissioner Buffalino: Your elections are in May, is that correct?

Council President Buckley: No, they changed from May to November at some point, I don't have the dates to when that happened.

Commissioner Buffalino: I know you haven't been there that long; what kind of voter turnout would you say you get?

Council President Buckley: Depending on whether or not it's a presidential election year, anywhere between like five and eight, nine thousand.

Commissioner Buffalino: Significant. Any other questions from the commission.

Commissioner Kastning: Just out of curiosity, what was your prior form of government?

Council President Buckley: Before 1995, I want to say borough, but I don't know. They were New Shrewsbury and then they changed to Tinton Falls and then they changed the form of government at the same time they changed to partisan versus nonpartisan, so I am not positive.

Commissioner Buffalino: I think she's covered everything that we wanted her to cover here in the questions.

Council President Buckley: I'm just looking at your questions, concurrent versus staggered I would favor staggered, specifically to where you never have a brand new slate of individuals running, you always have some folks that have two years' experience under their belt and a lot of the things are minutiae about why we did something the way we did in the past, so that significantly can help the members that have been there to help the newer elected officials and you never have a full turnover.

Commissioner Kastning: So, at some point you might have two or three people running, I think that's what you said, has it occurred that they run as a slate against another slate?

Council President Buckley: There have been those instances, there also have been instances of individuals running by themselves as well and you can get a lot of political people to say it might be advantageous one way or another. In Tinton Falls though, I don't really know that it's made too much of a difference, because when you're a nonpartisan there's no line, it's all just in this own box. We were in the third column, which is generally the least advantageous, when I ran for office and our whole slate won, so general logic doesn't necessarily apply. It also just depends on your voters and what and who because there is no line. If you're very involved in your community, whatever organization it may be, and then you decide to run for office, more

people generally are aware of you, so I think that's a good thing because it kind of drives people to be involved in their town. When I ran, initially I thought I was running by myself and then mutual friends in town said, "Oh I hear so-and-so wants to run, why don't you meet up with that person, I think you guys are similarly viewed why would you be running against one another." So, I met with that person and they were right and we ran together and there was another individual who was running who was thinking of running, we met with that person who decided to form a slate. It didn't matter what party we were because that's kind of how our slate comes together, it was kind of organic from voters talking to us and saying, "Hey you're running but this other person's running and I think you both would all make sense running together," and that's how it wound up happening.

Commissioner Buffalino: Would you say that it really lends a lot of strength to focusing on what the town really wants versus the political parties overall?

Council President Buckley: 100% yes, I think that's a main benefit.

Commissioner Berk: Since you're not running parties and there's not somebody selected by the party to run, how many people generally run for one position?

Council President Buckley: That's changed a lot over time from my understanding, so when I first moved to town there were folks that ran unopposed so it was hard to get people to run for office. When I ran for office, there were seven people running for three slots, so there were full slates and one person running individually on their own. Just looking at voter turnout, people didn't pay attention to anybody running one or another; they just went all over and I personally think that's a good thing because you can't rely on a political party, you have to get to know the issues specific to your town and the residents in that town. I think it drives that because of the form of government.

Commissioner Berk: Do you think residents pay more attention to what the people running are running on? I mean, is there more interest since they're not attached to a party? Do people want to know more about the candidates?

Council President Buckley: That's hard to say, I think it depends on the individual voter. I would generally say yes, people are inquiring more about the candidates because there is no political party affiliation with that, although often they'll want to know what your political party affiliation is or why you're running, what's the issue in town, and like I said, there are some things that when I ran for office, I didn't think would be the top of mind of the residents and wound up being a major election issue. I think it drives the grassroots issues and candidates, to be successful as governing body members, have to pay attention more to what the residents are looking for and why they elected them.

Commissioner Gilstein: I know this might be another one for Mr. Starkey, Kevin but can you run both for mayor and for council and then if you don't win as mayor, then you could be a council member or do you only have to run in one of those races?

Mr. Starkey: It doesn't happen a lot, I've seen it on occasion, I believe that you can run for both, but I know you can only accept one office if you're elected, although I have to say I think it's pretty rare that people do that, but I think it's possible.

Council President Buckley: Would it also depend on the years? Our terms are four years and I think on the committee form there are three, so if I was in the middle of my four-year council

term and I decided to run for mayor and I lost I would still be a council member; I wouldn't lose my seat because it wasn't my year for election. However if it was my year for election and I chose to run for mayor and not for council again and I lost the mayor then I wouldn't be anything anymore. So, I think it depends on the year as well. Sometimes if a mayor needs to be more present during working hours someone may not be inclined to run for mayor, but they may run for council because the council meetings are in the evening. I don't know how the committee form works, whether or not the governing body members would need to be doing things during the working day, so you might want to consider that as far as what is your population, what are the elected officials looking to do and time constraints all of that would play into who would choose to run for office and the time commitment involved.

Chairman Gee: Is that really true? Let me just test your hypothesis there because most of the time the mayor is not a full-time job; it's a part-time job and in either form you do have an administrator so I think that there may be from time to time some issues that have to be decided by the mayor as the chief executive, but most of the stuff is really handled by the business administrator. Any other questions?

There were no further questions.

Chairman Gee: Thank you very much, this has been very helpful. I know you've been very busy, but still managed to take time out to help us. We really appreciate it. There's nothing like a person who's actually currently in the governing body; that's on one of the forms we're considering, to just give us feedback on whatever points that we don't understand. So, again, thank you very much and we appreciate it.

Council President Buckley: Happy to help.

Chairman Gee: At this point is there any other new business.

There was no new business.

Chairman Gee: I will open up for public comments.

Chairman Gee explained to those in attendance how to speak and make comments and the rules set in place for speaking time limits.

Concetta Taylor, 6 Danae Court: My mother and father, who raised our family and still live in Holmdel and many of their friends, are hearing about this charter study for the first time and want to be included in the discussion. Unfortunately, many elderly people who do not utilize Zoom, in my opinion, this is creating an unfair advantage to them. How are they supposed to be involved? I've been on numerous, and I mean numerous, probably hundreds since the pandemic started, Zoom meetings and I know what hosts can and cannot allow on these meetings. We, the people of Holmdel, want full and complete transparency, we should be able to see all participants of the meeting as this will also allow us to see who is attending and who has their hands raised to ask questions. We also should be able to see all the questions that are being asked by every participant so that we know all questions are being answered and not selectively picked. In my honest opinion, it seems suspect to me the only reason this committee is still meeting on Zoom is to hide their shady business behind a computer. Members of this community do not live far away; maybe people that want this change live far away, but us locals who reside in the lovely town of Holmdel want this meeting in person as this is a major, major decision in our town. Charter study flew under the radar during the pandemic; myself and many

others feel taken advantage of from our mayor and the people involved. There is no way only five people were interested in being on this Charter Study Commission for something so powerful. Claims circulating that the charter study chairman Kin Gee also influenced the recent Board of Ed election and agenda. Me being a hometown mother of four children in the district, I find this extremely concerning and it most certainly strikes a nerve, not only with me, but also with many other members of our wonderful community. We need to know more about how involved Kin Gee is in our children's education; this is a controversial time in education and parents want to know. I saw another mother who asked the Board of Ed last week if Kin Gee has been involved in any capacity to the Board of Ed, and, of course, there was absolutely no response. We sit here and we patiently listen to you all go on and on about how wonderful the Charter Study Committee is, yet when us, the townspeople, turn to you for simple answers, they do not get answered. Since I brought up transparency earlier, let's just touch on this group's Facebook page shall we. Once the community started to get involved and ask questions on the page, comments started getting deleted, and not only that, now, as a matter of fact, comments are completely disabled, you cannot comment no longer.

Chairman Gee: I'm sorry, your three minutes are up.

Ms. Taylor: I'm finishing up.

Chairman Gee: Concetta, you have been muted because your time is up and you will be removed.

Chris DiMare, 10 Seven Oaks Drive: This three minute thing is ridiculous, we're supposed to have an open dialogue with the Holmdel residents who reside here. Cutting Concetta off is appalling. Kin, you're quite the salesman, your opening statements were biased and not entirely true. Let's be very clear, the opposition to this charter study is much more than the minority, which you stated. This grassroots movement of concerned Holmdel residents is continuing to grow at an impressive rate; we put together the following through public information because the Holmdel residents deserve to know who is running this charter study. Looking at the New Jersey Division of Revenue Business Registration, since November 2016 an LLC was registered to the charter study chairman Kin Gee Savant Services. On the Savant Services' website, the address is P.O. Box 761 in this beautiful town of Holmdel, New Jersey. On the side it states, "We are a campaign consultant strategic guidance and organizing advice company based in New Jersey," so Kin Gee has been a political consultant. Now here comes the major conflicts of interest for the Holmdel residents; this same P.O. Box 761 in Holmdel has also been utilized by the following for campaigns and fundraisers, which means that Kin was a political consultant for them and that his address was used for two current township committee members who voted yes for the charter study, Cathy Weber and Prakash Santhana, including what we saw in the December 2019 Two River Times article stating Kin Gee as Santhana's campaign manager. This address was also used for fundraising postings for the Emma for Holmdel Township Committee campaign in the 2021 primary election, sponsored and paid for by the Savant Services. Let's mention that Emma ran on the same ticket as our Mayor Buontempo in the 2020 committee race, Mayor Buontempo being the originator of bringing this charter study to life. So we ask what is Kin's relationship for the recent Board of Education to elect Collur, Tuccillo and Zhang using the same address with two winning seats and one is conveniently now the treasurer of the study, and this one strikes a nerve, this is our children, we want to know what Kin Gee and his influence to the Board of Ed. This address is now being used for the Holmdel's first charter study, and the latest, and we're still analyzing this, the P.O. Box is being used by the Asbury Park Democratic Chairman Angela Ahbez-Anderson who ran for the Monmouth County Clerk. My opinion, based on these findings, there's no study going on here,

nothing non-partisan about this chairman. This needs to be investigated, as do we not see this was not disclosed when Kin ran for the charter study; these are major conflicts of interest and we wonder what other connections are we going to find next? Kin, you have an opportunity here right now tonight to publicly clear the air, please correct me if we are wrong in any of these findings.

Wes Fagan, 50 Chestnut Ridge: As we enter Phase Two of our journey and recognizing that we have 15 meetings scheduled through August, I thought it a good idea to get to know you better through your publications, so I visited a website holmdelcharter.com. The home page is titled Holmdel Charter Study Commission, there's a nice brochure showing tonight's agenda and I encourage you to continue to publish agendas prior to each of the next 15 scheduled meetings. In quoting your website, it announces that by statute you commissioners are not compensated, however, all your expenses are paid including your attorney and your secretary for the nominal amount of \$15,000. Finally, the stated goal of this commission is to "recommend something that will be best for the next 100 years" and that your mission is heard and has a far reaching and lasting impact. The next screen requests donations be made to P.O. Box 761, but now the name has changed to Holmdel First Charter Study Committee, and now I'm scratching my head, did I just go down a rabbit hole? My questions are: for the attorney, is this legal; for Mr. Gee, is this moral; or the commissioners, does that not even matter? Secondly, is the donor list available to the public? And thirdly, if all your expenses are covered by we the taxpayers, what exactly is the money being used for? That's all.

Chairman Gee: I'd like to make a quick response because I think people are confusing a lot of things, so the website does have election information from prior to the November election. You look at some things that are left on the website and we, as candidates, can and do raise money in order to make the public question, raise awareness and so on, so what you're looking at is pre-November 2021 information.

Commissioner Gilstein: Just to be clear, we are not raising any money right now and we are not being compensated in any way right now. As Kin said, that was prior to the referendum question and while we were running, we did solicit for donations.

Commissioner Buffalino: Our expenses are for our counsel and as well as a secretary to take minutes so the public is informed. There's nothing else we're putting through as personal expenses here for travel or anything, so we're investing a lot of our time and effort in this to help this town and a lot of statements I hear being made and accusations are very disingenuous. They mean nothing because we haven't done anything that's bad or sinister here. Kin's efforts to run campaigns is not an illegal act, he's been involved in the town for many years and helped the town in quite a number of ways, so I'm having trouble with a lot of these disingenuous comments. Running smear campaigns and trying to hurt the people that sit on this council, who are spending a lot of time and effort of their own time, is something that shouldn't be happening here. You want to cooperate with us and help us with our program, it's a good thing. I'm sitting here because the things that went on in this town four years ago, at the time we fired our township administrator, our CFO resigned and our mayor was censored all at the very same time, so red flags were flying all over the place here and I've been in the corporate lending business for 45 years and if that had happened to one of my clients, I would have had a forensic audit going back 10 years on this town; that's something you better start understanding. The optional forms that are being presented here are to give the community more control and oversight in government, that's why the government passed these in 1950. Some of these forms of government that currently exist are more than 200 years old; they don't match up with modern standards. The options give us more things that the community can benefit from now.

Why there's such a controversy over this, I don't get it, I don't understand it. You want to attack people, nobody sitting on this council can be attacked because we haven't done a damn thing wrong.

Kai Collins, 127 South Telegraph Hill Road: So, I'm not against options, I actually voted for this commission, and my husband and I have gone back and forth a few times on it. We just didn't really understand what was happening, so he voted against it and I voted for it; we figured that would create a balance. So, I just feel like there has been no effort made to engage the community in this monumental decision that we're going to be asked to make in a few short months. You say that you may not recommend anything, but then everything I read in articles and on your Facebook posts, leads me to believe that you are going to recommend that we change our form of government. This could be as early as next month, for those who still plan to mail in ballots, so we don't have a lot of time to understand this, and the slides just presented were very confusing and I have read through this so many times. I do have a question, because this continues to keep coming up in conversations and I hope that you'll offer a response because your campaign is really that of transparency at the end of the day, I want to know who is this infamous party boss that supporters of this change to our form of government continue to point to? Who exactly is the one throwing our elections and manipulating our township form of government here in Holmdel? Who exactly makes our form of government so dysfunctional that we need to necessitate a study that I feel was slipped in when you knew nobody really understood what we were voting for and now probable recommendations are going to be made for a very drastic and lasting change? When a change is recommended and the people are asked to vote on it, I don't have any confidence whatsoever that voters are going to understand what they're voting for and I base this on the lack of participation that the community has been afforded up to this point. I think we need to activate the community, maybe this is a town hall event, I don't know, but I think we need awareness before anything else ends up on a ballot that we don't understand because that is a breakdown in communication and leadership and I do hold the township members responsible for that. So, Kin it really pains me to say, because you know I have supported you in the past, that I can see that you are a politician and your connections run very deep and I took some time to learn more about this history and I did learn that you formed a campaign company and you back democratic candidates and you attend democratic political events and you do it all very quietly until now. Then I see a lot of things have been scrubbed when I try to look for them, but I do think that your connections are going to be revealed because this stuff does matter, especially when you sit up there. Here you are on our main stage, with people you campaign for, voting to form a commission that you lead with a group of people you recruited, asking us to look at you as a nonpartisan member of our community, and so it kind of shows me that you must think we're ignorant, that we can be all manipulated so easily and I really see that maybe you're a party boss on the one side and I want to know who is the guy on the opposing team working against you. So, if you could please answer this question tonight. Thank you.

Chairman Gee: The commission is trying to gather facts, we're fact gathering and we've been holding these meetings and we invited guests. All these meetings are public, they've been recorded and the questions you ask are actually points that are raised by the guest speakers, they're not points that we as the commission are raising. I don't know if you were here at the beginning of the meeting when I summarized certain things, those are the input and findings that we have gotten from the people that spoke. If you go back to some of the meetings, there are so many videos and then you could watch them, they're all recorded, they're all for you to watch, they're all pursuant to public notice act, you don't even actually have to be physically present. If you want a really short answer based on the input that we've gotten, what the people are saying, at least the people we interview, they're talking about party bosses outside of

Holmdel, for whatever respective party. In this case, a lot of the elections that are being held are being decided by, based on the input we've gotten, basically by the Monmouth County level party bosses.

Commissioner Berk: We've also gotten a lot of comments from people that want to elect their mayor directly and that's not an option in town. I think that was one of the main things that Mayor Buontempo was concerned about, so that's another issue that we feel that we need to look at.

Chairman Gee: But, again, the issues are being brought to us by various speakers and by the public, where the commission thus far has been continuing the fact-finding. These are not issues we're bringing up; we've asked questions about the different characteristics of the township committee and the guest speakers bring their observations. We included people who have served over 60 years on township committee, including 20 years as mayor.

Jeff Mann, 705 Holmdel Road: Where to begin, Jerry, you want to talk about disingenuous and it's quite the dog and pony show, you sir chose to waste your time with this and I can't tell you how annoyed I am listening to this and listening to the parade of people, and if you haven't noticed already, we formed a grassroots initiative of concerned residents that oppose this charter. One of the major issues comes straight from ignoring the Faulkner Act itself, and not only is it appalling muting a resident, it's a violation of the Faulkner Act and I'll cite it for you, Citation 40:69A-9 title Hearings, Public Forums, and I quote, "The charter commission shall hold public hearings, may hold private hearings and sponsor public forums and generally shall provide for the widest possible public information and discussion respecting the purposes and progress of its work." Disingenuous, this is not being followed because the commission is cancelling Holmdel residents, opposing anyone who has an opposing viewpoint is cancelled. We have dozens of screenshots of the commission being selective on which questions are asked and questions aren't being answered and they're being ignored all together. Opposing comments have been deleted off the Holmdel Charter Commission Facebook page, as well as claims that certain residents have been blocked completely from commenting and now comments are shut off altogether on this very public information and discussion page. The deletion of valid comments and blocking concerned residents are a clear violation of civil liberties and a complaint has been filed with the ACLU. I pose a question, and it'll go unanswered as many others have, is everyone on this committee a full-time Holmdel resident who is currently residing in Holmdel and I ask because it's confusing to me with something being discussed as altering our government structure which has been working well for the majority of 165-year history is being done on a Zoom call. Pandemic or not, being that the pandemic is over, it's even more suspect as to why you're hiding behind a Zoom when everyone else is meeting in person and I know you mention it's the speakers, but let's Zoom them in and meet in person. Furthermore, how are you educating and reaching the elderly, potentially less tech savvy, individuals with this, they certainly have little idea how to access Zoom and not only is that not putting residents first, this is you selectively choosing which Holmdel residents you are going to involve in discussions.

Commissioner Gilstein: One of my experiences is that with the Zoom call we have a lot more participation. I participated in a lot of township committee meetings and there are a lot more people on in the Zoom call and the Zoning Board just met this week via Zoom, so it's not that everybody is back in person so let's just be clear about that. People are doing whatever works best toward their objective of fulfilling the charter of their group.

Commissioner Buffalino: I want to add that, yes, an answer to Jeff's question, everybody here is a current resident in town and for many years, I myself have been here 27 years.

Commissioner Gilstein: I've been here 36 years.

Commissioner Buffalino: So, there's nobody here that doesn't have a vested interest in our town and has been here for many government meetings and participating as a volunteer in the town's activities. We've been involved, very much so, so we understand the positives and the negatives of what's been happening here and that's why we decided to run for this commission. This wasn't an off the chance occurrence, we all have been involved in the town for many years, we know people, people know us, we're not trying to be deceitful here in any way, we're doing the best we can with the technology we have.

Commissioner Gilstein: At the last meeting and this meeting, I've heard a lot of comments about why do we need to do this, we're such a great town. I just want to say that I fully believe we are a great town, this is an awesome municipality we live in and I'd say we are very well run. My reason for participating in this is only to see could we be even better, could we give more power to our people and it's worth investigating that and it's always about can you be even better. When I was at UCLA in graduate school 1975 to 1980, several times I watched Jimmy Connors practice and he had a coach who he practiced with, and at that time Jimmy Connors was number one in the world. He was the best tennis player in the world and he had a coach because he wanted to see if he could be even better and he wasn't satisfied that he was already great, and I think it's the same thing here. It's about can we be even better, are there options that are open to us that could make us an even stronger municipality and that's what we're examining.

Chairman Gee: Counselor, there's been some comments made about public discussions and certain things, I wonder if you could comment on what requirements we have?

Mr. Starkey: A speaker referenced the obligations under the Faulkner Act, I think he meant the Open Public Meetings Act and that requires this committee to conduct all of its meetings in a public forum and every meeting, I can tell you, has been in a public forum available to everyone who wants to participate and I see there's, by my account, 24 participants and I agree with Commissioner Gilstein, you rarely if ever get that kind of number at a township committee meeting. Someone asked about the three-minute limitation, a time limitation is used for members of public in a lot of towns and that is absolutely not to limit people, when you have a lot of people attending a meeting it helps to do things in orderly fashion to allow everyone to speak without the meeting going until all hours of the of the night, and if you give everyone a chance to speak three minutes, in my view and I think it's been shown tonight, is really a good amount of time for people to get out their comments and their statements of what they want to say. The goal here is to be open, transparent, available to the public and open for public comment and I think, frankly, what we're seeing tonight shows that that's being honored.

Chairman Gee: I just want to be clear, the Open Public Meetings Act requirement, first of all for township governing bodies, such as township committee and for BOE, there are specific things mentioned in the law where they are required to have public comment sessions, and, in fact, they do. However, and in certain things that may be potentially adversarial there'll be some room for public comment, however the Charter Study Commission is not one where it is required to have a public comment yet from day one, we have allowed that. I think there was an attempt to cite something in the statute of the Faulkner Act in terms of open discussion and dissemination of information, and all of our meetings have been open and all people can watch,

but not only that, we have actively had public hearings to receive comments from the public in Phase One. We will have them in Phase Two and likely at Phase Three, so we have explicitly held public hearings just for the purpose of receiving comments in addition to allowing a public comment session at the end of each meeting. So, the Charter Study Commission is here to try to gather facts and gather things from experts and from invited guests. However, at the same time, the public comment session is not a deposition, we will address comments and questions where we think it's appropriate, but it's not one where someone has a question, regardless of appropriateness, or where you're free to make any comment, you want and we've been allowing that.

Tom Santora: I hear a lot of questions that go unanswered, so I'm just going to ask two questions. One, who ordered the charter committee, and two, because you five are going to be determining the best route for Holmdel, I'd like each of you to just let us know if you are a Republican or a Democrat and I'd like an answer because, Kin, a lot of times you say thank you for your comment and we move on.

Commissioner Gilstein: On your original question, the Charter Study Commission was actually decided by the voters of Holmdel in November, but its origination goes back to an ordinance that the township committee passed in August. The original reading was in mid-July or end of July and then two weeks later they voted and passed that a question shall be placed on the November ballot to have a referendum to see whether we should have a Charter Study Commission. Then the voters of Holmdel decided through a significant majority of people voting in favor.

Mr. Santora: I understand that people voted, but whose idea was it, what person?

Commissioner Gilstein: It was the township committee.

Mr. Santora: I understand the township committee voted for it, whose idea was it and I'd like to each of you to go through your political affiliation.

Commissioner Gilstein: I'm a registered Republican.

Chairman Gee: I'm sorry, I have to remove him. This is not that position where he is allowed to ask political affiliations of individuals. He's allowed to make public comment and certainly he's allowed to ask certain questions, but he's trying to rehash history. The township committee, as Commissioner Gilstein stated, introduced an ordinance that was voted on at the introduction by five members and received unanimous voting including all members and then at the final adoption it was voted on, so for you to ask the question well whose idea it is, then you really should go back to the township committee. But not only that was last year, if you had any questions about that you should have asked that before the November election of last year. So, I think we have posted on different sites that the members of the commission consist of three Republicans, one Democrat and one unaffiliated and that's been all over even before the election, so I don't think that we need to rehash that. You asked your questions, we gave you three minutes and I think Commissioner Gilstein answered some of them and I just answered some, we're going to see the next speaker.

John Giampolo, 43 Blue Hills Drive: Before I even say the question that I had in mind, I'm just going to say I really don't understand what the issue is why you can't answer the last caller's question about who exactly it was that was the first person to propose the Charter Study Commission, whose idea it was. I'm completely lost as to why that's a problem, why you don't

know or why you would refuse to answer. Having said that, I'm also a little I'm also, even more, shocked to hear that when people are speaking during this meeting this evening after they're done you are blocking them out of the meeting, you are removing them from the meeting, which is the complete opposite of transparent. People who are calling in have every right to hear the entirety of this meeting, including what other speakers have to say, what their comments or questions are and what your responses are. Kin Gee, you said you are removing people, so I can't believe you're doing this. Also, I began looking at this Charter Study Commission hoping that I would see a genuine study of how some things can be improved and unfortunately, what I continue to see is, even though Kin Gee said during this meeting there's no preconceived notions that you are studying fact-finding, and yet on your own website, *Better Holmdel*, you have been promoting, since early February, the concept of changing to nonpartisan local government; it's also on the Charter Study Commission's own website and Facebook page, since early February. I don't know how you can keep saying that you are performing a study that there are no preconceived notions, when you are aggressively promoting something on your own website even in early February before you've even gotten started with the actual study fact-finding. I've also yet to hear, regarding the idea of changing to nonpartisan, which you seem to be aggressively promoting, any discussion or any fact-finding about what would be done to make sure that you do not have the low voter turnout that we keep hearing guest speakers talk about, to make sure it does not result in gerrymandering with multiple candidates running deluding majority vote. I've also not heard anything regarding what that's going to do in terms of costs to Holmdel residents. There's a lot that's being unanswered.

Chairman Gee: So, we allow people to speak and I apologize if they have been somehow accidentally removed from the meeting, they were supposed to be removed from the panel, so if that did happen, I sincerely apologize. As to one specific point, I want to emphasize again, so far, the commission has not made any recommendations. There was a comment made that people are promoting nonpartisan and I think I want to be clear, if the commission, as part of its interview process, received comments from either the public hearing or invited guests and that's what they speak about and there's either articles or other things that talk about what those guest speakers are talking about, that is not what the commission is promoting, it is sharing the comments that were made by guest speakers and I think that is an important difference. The commission has been receiving the input and they are again on the videos and things that you can watch and you can see, but those are not comments by the commission but rather by guest speakers.

Allison Lopresti, 49 Ladwood Drive: I work in fully remote so I'm very familiar with Zoom, and while it's become a big part of how we communicate and have meetings, I feel like, for something as important as this, there could be an option to have an in-person component. We have 24 people on the Zoom call, I think people should be given the option to go into a physical space just like the BOE meeting. If it's more convenient for you to go call into a Zoom fine, but the option should be there. Some comments that I heard earlier about Facebook and I think the concern collectively with that Facebook page is that it appears that you're selectively allowing comments or deleting comments or blocking users and I think that's the biggest concern. I've got some comments that are kind of in line with what John Giampolo actually just said, so like many residents in Holmdel I live here because I love the town and the local government, the schools and the BOE and the way they have been organized for many, many years, always looking to improve things, but I think the problem is that it seems as though the commission's mind is made up and this is all a game, this is all for show. So, I listened to the last Charter Study Commission meeting and read the Facebook page and website, and again, you say this, "studying and exploring whether to change Holmdel's local government but haven't made any decisions or recommendations yet," and that's what you were voted on to do, to study and then

make recommendations whether to change anything, but that does not appear what the study commission has been doing. Since early February you've been posting on the commission's Facebook page and website that "Holmdel residents asked the commission for a nonpartisan government," so you've been promoting that on your own website, *Better Holmdel*. So, by this commission's own words you have already made up your minds before the study barely began and you're using this fake study to push a political agenda. What Holmdel residents asked this commission to change to a nonpartisan government, who? I have heard and read nothing but residents opposing this at this point. You still can't confirm what you would do to prevent low voter turnout and gerrymandering that would result from nonpartisan elections with numerous candidates running just to divide up and manipulate and dilute the majority vote, yet you've been promoting the change to nonpartisan for the past month. Maybe that's what the agenda's been all along, to change a system that makes it easier for you and your favorite candidates to get elected when they otherwise wouldn't. That's all.

Chairman Gee: There's been several comments about the Facebook page, the Charter Study Commission does have one and it is the forum for the Charter Study Commission to share information about progress and about future meetings. There is one Facebook post that does say residents ask for change, however I think people are confusing or conflating whether it was on purpose or not. That was an article, published by the Two River Times and written by an independent reporter and that was the headline, that was shared, that was not a post by the commission. It was an article, just as we have shared other articles along that forum. The Charter Study Commission Facebook is a page where we post our meeting agendas, guest speakers and anything that may be in the press that we think residents might be interested in. It is not a forum for people who may have certain views, they're more than welcome to come on here during the public comments or have their own platform, which sounds like you guys do, to share that.

Ralph Purcell, 18 Red Coach Lane: My question is, why do you want to change our government at this time? Where's the outcry? I speak to all the neighbors in the neighborhood and none of them are aware of the fact that this study is even being conducted, yet when I mentioned that 165 years the government has been in existence, they say they have no concern, they said it's been working why do we have to change, it makes this town most desirable. Another thing is, when are we going to stop using Covid as a cover to not have face-to-face meetings? That's it, have a good night.

Jack Straub, 235 Main Street, Keyport: I'm not a Holmdel resident, I just was watching your meeting and am interested in your possible change of government, but maybe this helps as a complete outsider. I don't know the politics, I don't know who's who, but earlier when someone was speaking about your website, the fact that there's a donate portion on the website that goes to the chairman's political fund doesn't seem to be right, and excuse that it's left over from last year's election, four months ago. How could you still have a donation page on this charter commission's website that could potentially send money to the chairman's political campaign, I don't understand that at all. Thank you for your allowing me to comment.

Sal Genevieve, 17 Beacon Court: I just want to say that I grew up in Holmdel and I just don't see any reason for this charter study. I was unaware of it; my neighbors are unaware of it. A lot of you have not lived here as long, but if it's not broke don't fix it. So, we're allowed to disagree with you Jerry.

Commissioner Buffalino: I don't have any problem with disagreements.

Mr. Genevieve: Just seems like you're going about it the wrong way, and you know to Mr. Gilstein, you mentioned before about the Zoom calls, you said that a lot of people are on Zoom calls, but one of the speakers said the elderly, and my mother has been living in this town she wants to get involved, but she can't get on a Zoom call because she doesn't even have a computer.

Commissioner Gilstein: I have several friends who are in their 90s and they get on Zoom all right.

Mr. Genevieve: But some don't. You guys have been speaking a lot and you don't answer any questions, you just go on to the next person. All you have to do is take ten seconds to answer the questions. I don't have anything else to say.

James Agnew, 7 Hillcrest Road: I understand Red Bank is currently going through a charter study and it was interesting to note that they had eleven candidates petition to fill the five commissioner's seats. I feel Holmdel residents love Holmdel just as much as Red Bank residents feel about their town. With that being said, it's hard to wrap my mind around only five people in our entire town petitioning to be nominated and run unopposed for such a powerful position. You also brought on the Ocean mayor last meeting and I see the mayor is two years into serving an eight-year term, the charter study keeps harping on giving the power to the people and if we make these proposed changes and provide a four-year term limit this certainly is not giving the power to our people. Currently our mayor rotates every year, this is more in the people's favor. That's pretty much all I really want to say.

Ron Emma, 32 Ladwood Drive: In an effort of full and complete transparency, because that's the term that I've been hearing tonight, Ron Emma two-time failed township committee candidate. Having said that, let me remind everybody that this commission was formed by the four to one vote by the township committee. For those who are saying that they weren't aware or they're not paying attention, that's not this commission's problem, get out pay attention and vote. So, maybe you can't address some of the questions that were raised tonight, but I can for Kai Collins, who asked who is behind this, Sean Golden is the party boss of the Monmouth County Republican Commission, that's your answer. The vote was taken in July or August of last year and it was four to one voted in favor of a commission just to study the issue. The fact that this commission was put together of five unopposed candidates is not this commission's fault, maybe the opposition was asleep at the wheel. Why didn't they put up their candidates to run, that's not Zach's problem, Kin's problem, Jerry's problem, it's an elected body, the voters said we want this and let's do it. As far as the grassroots movement or the grassroots initiative, I say bring it on because let me remind everybody that the vote was 53% to 48%. So, whatever you guys decide, whether to keep the same or change it whatever, I say bring it on, that's a good thing because why would anyone be for less choice versus more choice. As far as Mr. Kin Gee, you must be a magician because you've now been accused of influencing BOE elections, which has got nothing to do with this and how do you influence a township committee vote of four to one, I have no idea. All I can say is, why would you be against less choice versus more choice. Thank you and I applaud all of you for the time and effort that you put in on this committee because I know how long it takes of your time, so thank you very much for that.

Tom Wood, 20 Heather Hill Way: I guess similar to the previous commenter, I don't quite understand what the issue that some people have with this process is. Some people thought maybe we should look at having a different arrangement of the way our township is governed and a ballot question was put before the voters of Holmdel and the voters of Holmdel voted in

favor of having such a commission study. What we might do differently, so some reason why, we have to do things exactly the way we've done them for the past gazillion years. These people have agreed to give a tremendous amount of time to participate in that study, and the township committee, which is majority Republican, voted in favor of establishing this committee and the committee's established and right now they're, as near as I can tell, doing a good job trying to put some alternatives in front of the voters. Nothing that this committee decides will automatically become the new way of doing things, they're going to give us the opportunity to think about some new structures and they're going out of their way to become informed about what might be another good structure. Anybody who thinks that there's something nefarious going on here is just not paying attention, we should be thanking this committee for doing its job and getting out of the way and letting them letting them do their job. I look forward to the recommendations at the earliest possible time. That's all I have to say, thank you.

Terence Wall, 170 La Quinta Court: I think the question for the day here is, why not transparency. I just heard from Tom Wood, who's a family donor to committeeman Prakash Santhana. I heard from Ron Emma, who's a political client of Kin Gee. For those who want to skip to the end, it's very simple, vote no when they look to eliminate the legacy Holmdel Township Committee because folks it's coming, spread the word. I've lived in Holmdel all my life, graduated Holmdel schools, I was elected for nine years to the township committee, I was just re-elected to the Holmdel Board of Ed. The Board of Education is supposed to be non-political, it's true, but I experienced incredibly low-class attacks from Kin Gee and most of the members of this group, including Jerry Buffalino, who had the audacity to attack me to my fellow parishioners in St. Catherine's Church. It's interesting, a recent homily just called out hypocrites, Jerry, you should watch it. This group is polluted by campaign contributions and very sadly it's a charade, because looking at forms of government is in many ways a noble endeavor, but the decision is already done. They campaigned on it, the damage is ongoing they campaigned on eliminating the historic Holmdel government and look no further than the banners on Bill Kastning's front lawn that talked about electing a mayor directly. You can have that conversation, but for God's sake have it honestly and have some transparency. Kastning, by the way, works for a former democrat mayor in Holmdel who suggested we break this wonderful town into wards and increase the number of elected officials which will bloat the budget; funded by vendors by the way who are waiting for elimination of the government to get a shot at taxpayer money, look at Acrisure who donated the money. Greg Buontempo already changed his campaign to council for next year to run for mayor, please don't take us for fools. Santhana and Weber are going to lose this November, and this is clutching on with fingernails to hold on to the body politic and stay in office. I recommend Kin Gee resigns and is replaced with someone who has no conflicts of interest. If you want a fresh start for the Charter Study Committee and not have this go down in flames, the first thing you need to do is replace this chairman. Thank you.

Commissioner Buffalino: So, Terrence, using your wife's editorial page on *Tap Into* to smear campaigns and to tell lies about individuals and hurt their reputation and espouse your own political goals, that's unethical and that might be one of the reasons why the word is getting around. Now, I don't recall saying anything to anybody at St. Catharine's, but people know who you are, they know what you've done, you can't hide any of that. I don't have anything in my closet that I have to be embarrassed about, I can tell you that right now, and I have plenty of friends in this town, so continue on with what you're doing and we'll see how this turns out, but we're not afraid of you, I could tell you that right now.

Chairman Gee: There are no more hands raised I'm going to close the public comment portion and can I get a motion to adjourn? Commissioner Gilstein offered a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Berk. A voice vote confirmed all in favor.

Respectfully submitted,
Bonnie K. Thomas, Commissioner Secretary