

City Charter Commission – Charter Creation Process

To prepare to write the City Charter, each Charter Commissioner was provided with several documents for their review. Each Commissioner has a copy of several sample Charters from other communities and one guiding document from the National Civic League. The sample Charters made available to the Commission include the National League of Cities Model Charter and the City Charters from Caro, Chelsea, Saline, Plymouth, Tecumseh and Howell. They also have the draft City Charter from the Village of Jonesville, a village that is also currently going through the incorporation process.

The Commission chose to use the National Civic League (NCL) Model Charter as a starting point since it was a good template to work from. The NCL Model Charter is a compilation of sample “Articles” (i.e. chapters). Each Article covers a different topic in an organized manner. When any Commission member does not feel that the language used in the Model Charter document works well for Dexter, they can request that it be replaced with new language or language from one of the other sample documents. The Model Charter is a document that is used nationwide, so there are also Michigan specific Articles that need to be included. It is anticipated that draft language for those Articles will come from the other sample charters of Michigan Cities and be modified accordingly to fit Dexter.

The Commission is creating the draft Dexter Charter on an Article by Article basis. Each new Article first appears on a regular Charter Commission agenda as a First Reading. The Commission discusses the draft language from one or more of the available model templates, makes changes as deemed appropriate and takes a vote on each of the sections in the Article.

Once the Commission has reviewed, discussed and voted on each section within an Article, the draft Article is presented in its entirety at a subsequent meeting as a Second Reading. At this reading the Commission makes any additional changes and votes on the Article as a whole.

After the Article has gone through its Second Reading it is considered a completed draft Article. Each draft Article will be reviewed again once all of the draft Articles are complete.

The Commission encourages public participation in this process. Two opportunities for public comment are provided on each Charter Commission agenda. At the beginning of the meeting, any attendee who informs the Village Office in advance of the meeting can speak for 5 minutes (10 minutes if representing a group). At the end of the meeting, any attendee can speak for 5 minutes (10 minutes if representing a group). Attendees with questions during the meeting can request to be recognized by the Chair. Written comments are placed in the packet of information distributed to each Commission member prior to every meeting. Written comments can be submitted to the Village at any time either by dropping them off at Village offices or by emailing them to cnicholls@dextermi.gov.