

## Bloomfield Town Charter Revision Commission

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's)

- **What is the Bloomfield Town Charter?**

- The Bloomfield Town Charter functions as the blueprint of town government. It describes how a Town government is structured.

- **Why is the Town Charter Revision important?**

- Local government provides a vast array of services to residents, ranging from public safety to utilities, recreation, education, transportation, storm water management, zoning and land use regulation and enforcement, construction permitting and inspection, not to mention transparency, accessibility, public engagement and much more. Charter Revision enables Bloomfield to evaluate how well it functions and serves its residents. It is an opportunity to learn how the town operates and guide how services will be delivered in the future.

- **What is the Town Charter Revision Commission?**

- The Charter Revision Commission is a group of five citizens who are examining the current structure of Bloomfield's government and will make recommendations for possible changes.

- **Why does the Town Charter need to be reviewed and revised?**

- The Town Charter was last revised in 2006. Since then, there have been many changes in Town government, which are not reflected in the document. In addition, the Charter is written in a style that may be difficult to understand, and the organization of the document is confusing, and could be streamlined.

- **When will the Commission begin its work?**

- The Commission will begin the process with a public hearing on **Thursday, April 18, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.** It will continue with a series of subject matter meetings, all open to the public and will conclude, as it started, with a public hearing in mid-late summer 2024. The revised Charter will be presented to the Town Council at that time and, if approved, to the voters for approval in November 2024.

- **Who approves of changes recommended by the Charter Revision Commission?**

- The Charter Revision Commission votes to recommend any changes to the Town Charter, those recommendations are sent to the Town Council for a vote. If they accept and there are major changes to the Town Charter, a ballot question must be voted on by the Town and if approved, registered with the state.

- **What is Bloomfield's current form of government?**

- Currently, the Town of Bloomfield has a Council/Manager form of government. Our legislative body consists of nine Councilors directly elected to two-year terms. The day-to-day management of the Town is handled by the Town Manager, a full-time contract employee who reports to the Town Council. The Town Manager oversees the entire administration of the Town and heads of all major departments report directly to the Town Manager.

- **What can (& can't) be accomplished through changing the Town Charter?**

- Many aspects of the Town Charter can be changed via the Town Charter revision process from the form of government (i.e: Town Council & Town Manager) to how often the Charter Revision is conducted in the future but there are some limits:

- **Charter change CAN...**

- Restrict or increase options available to governmental leaders
- Alter electoral representation
- Clarify ambiguity or confusion caused by existing charter language
- Redistribute powers among elected officials, appointed officials, and governing bodies as well as between city officials and citizens
- Set the stage for governmental leaders to achieve desired changes such as creating positions or bodies to address identified needs.
- Convert elected governmental positions to appointed positions or vice versa
- Define a Vision or set of Values that drive the decisions and evaluations of the administration and elected officials
- Alter a form of government so the new form is better aligned with the preferences of citizens

- **Charter change CAN'T...**

- Automatically increase the quality of governmental products and services
- Eliminate political in-fighting and make elected officials achieve consensus (Although governmental form can affect the likelihood of conflict and method of resolution)
- Jumpstart the local economy
- Decrease local crime
- Improve the school system
- Stop a controversial public project
- Change or eliminate state-mandated activities

- **Who decides whether the revised Charter will be adopted?**

- The decision as to whether to adopt the revised Charter rests solely with the *registered voters* of the Town of Bloomfield. The revised Charter will be placed on the ballot for the 2024 Presidential Election, and the Town will vote to approve or reject the entire revised Charter.

- **Who should participate in Charter Revision?**

- All Bloomfield residents and employees are invited to participate in the Charter Revision process.

- **Why should you care?**

- As discussed above the Town Charter is the legal foundation for local government. If you care about the budget, planning, government contracts and spending, the impact of collective bargaining, public safety, and land use processes for the Town, then you should care about charter revision. If you want to hold your elected officials accountable your voice should be heard.
- It is important that voices representing a wide range of perspectives are represented in the Town Charter Revision process. All residents will have the opportunity to learn how their town government operates and how decisions are made that affect the quality of our services, schools and the strength of our community. Learn about your local government and invest in Bloomfield's future by participating in the Charter Revision.

- **How do I participate in the process?**

- The law requires that the Charter Revision Commission hold two public hearings, one at the start of the process (which will take place on April 18, 2024), and one when the draft report is completed. The Charter Revision Commission also plans to hold several public forums addressing specific topics. The Public can also attend any meeting of the Charter Revision Commission, and there is an opportunity for public statements at the start of every meeting. In addition, e-mail comments can be sent to [CharterRevision@bloomfieldct.gov](mailto:CharterRevision@bloomfieldct.gov) – a new e-mail address that has been set up for the Charter Revision Commission. Written comments can be submitted through the online webform at this link:

<https://ct-bloomfield.civicplus.com/FormCenter/Boards-Commissions-11/Charter-Revision-Commission-Public-Comme-68>

- **How else can I find out what is happening with the Charter Revision Commission?**

- The Charter Revision Commission has a site on the Town of Bloomfield website. Agendas, minutes of meetings and a wide variety of pertinent documents including the current Town charter are posted there. Additional information will be posted as it is developed.

**THANK YOU FOR BEING ENGAGED WITH THIS PROCESS!!!**