

**Michelle Turner**

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**Subject:**

FW: CHARTER COMMISSION INVITATION - JUNE 24, PUBLIC HEARING

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**From:** Pete DeCola <pdecola@gmail.com>

**Sent:** Tuesday, June 22, 2021 9:03 AM

**To:** Mike Hanlon <mjhanlon3@verizon.net>

**Cc:** Charter Commission <chartercommission@plymouth-ma.gov>; Bill Abbott <wabbott1@aol.com>

**Subject:** Re: CHARTER COMMISSION INVITATION - JUNE 24, PUBLIC HEARING

Hello Bill,

I would also like to provide written comments to the Charter Commission as you begin your work. I am out of town this week as well and likely won't have internet as of later today.

First off, I think it's important for the Commission to acknowledge the mandate for change given by the voters in the May elections. I would encourage you and all the Commission members to keep an open mind about the best form of government moving forward. I've read the Old Colony Memorial article preceding the election and it seems that many of the Commission members that were elected believe that the current form of representational town meeting "has served Plymouth well" and that change is not necessary. I would argue that both of those are not necessarily true but that discussion should be afforded plenty of public input and should be based on objective data, not the nostalgia that many Commission members seem to have and are willing to inject into the Commissions work. I will encourage the Commission members to look forward to the future challenges Plymouth will be facing such as the decommissioning of the nuclear power plant, climate change and all that brings with it (sea level rise, marine and terrestrial ecosystem changes, severe weather) instead of the past. There's an old saying that you cannot steer a ship by looking at its wake. I will ask the Commission member to learn from the past but to also maintain a sharp lookout for Plymouth's challenges that lie ahead of us.

Second, I will ask the Commission members to be honest with themselves and the taxpayers they are serving. Plymouth is a great place to live but let's be real, it's not perfect. It's also not the small town many of the Commission members grew up in. It's an honest to goodness city (19th largest in the Commonwealth) with real issues and problems that need a full time professional government that's accountable to the taxpayers. Plymouth has the dubious "distinction" of being the largest town in the the state which means we stand out among our peers for failing to recognize the reality of our situation.

Third, please don't act out of fear of change. I know change means uncertainty but change is also good for proper growth and development. I've heard so many arguments against political change in Plymouth, mainly from people who believe the fallacy that representational town meeting is somehow the only form of government immune to corruption to others who feel that their business interests will be threatened. To all of these people, I will ask them to look at the history of our great nation and the ability to manage and encourage change is one of the keys that's made this country great.

Finally, I would ask the Commission members to acknowledge that that if they really want a better Plymouth, the question before them is not if change is necessary but rather what type of change should be made.

Good luck with the Commissions work and I would be happy to help you out in any way possible.

Captain Pete DeCola  
U.S. Coast Guard (retired)