

## Plymouth Charter Commission - Committee of Precinct Chairs

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Hi Mike . . . as we discussed, here are notes on what the Commission would like to do with respect to the Committee of Precinct Chairs (COPC).

The COPC was added to our Charter in the mid-2000's as per Sections 2-11-4 and 2-3-4. Section 2-3-4 was edited in 2017 by a 5-year Charter Review Committee (CRC).

"2-11-4: The precinct chairpersons shall meet together within forty-five (45) days following each town election and shall organize as a Committee of Precinct Chairs, electing a Chairperson and a Clerk."

"2-3-4: The Committee of Precinct Chairs described in Section 2-11-4 may from time to time appoint subcommittees of itself or committees of Town Meeting members to review town by-laws, town meeting rules, the status of past town meeting actions[O1] , and for such other purposes as they shall deem appropriate and shall make recommendations to the representative town meeting and/or the moderator at least annually. The committee also may perform other duties designated to facilitate the business of town meeting. In addition to any other powers conferred upon it by the representative town meeting, the Committee of Precinct Chairs shall periodically review the rules of procedure that govern the conduct of the representative town meeting and report its finding to the representative town meeting at least annually."

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*[O1]2-3-4: On 12/07/17 the CRC agreed to alter 2-3-4 by adding the wording, "...the status of past town meeting actions..." in response to feedback and discussion around whether or not past town meeting actions were implemented.*

The current Commission has discussed clarifying COPC's existing powers and adding new powers to the COPC which are in line with its role as a key committee functioning within the legislative branch as a creature of Town Meeting. They include:

A. Enforcement of Charter provisions. Many Charter provisions currently are not being observed or followed such as, e.g., the failure of the Planning Board and Planning Department to make planning decisions and implement zoning changes that are consistent with the Town's Master Plan; failure of the Select Board to act through the Town Manager with respect to the operation of Town agencies; compliance with the conflict of interest Charter provisions; failure of Town financial decisions being made in accordance with Charter provisions, etc.

B. Making of recommendations to Town Meeting with respect to Warrant Articles not involving financial matters, and restricting Finance Committee to advise only on Articles with a primary financial element.

C. Providing legislative follow-up (i.e., accountability) and oversight with respect to past actions of Town Meeting and reporting re same to Town Meeting.

D. Joining in making of appointments to Finance Committee and other selected boards and committees.

E. Providing for actions on behalf of Town Meeting in between regular Town Meeting such as authorizing expenditure of funds to a certain limit in the event of an emergency called by Select Board or by COPC, or in the event of an opportunity that arises that reasonably requires action on behalf of Town Meeting until the next regularly scheduled Town Meeting.

F. Recommending with a 2/3 vote of COPC to the Select Board to call a Special Town Meeting within 30 days.

G. Increased interaction with Finance Committee including at least one joint meeting of COPC and Finance Committee at least 14 days prior to Town Meeting.

H. Other powers as suggested by Charter Commissioners to be discussed.

Note: The a major issue of our local government is, can the Town operate more efficiently with a council form rather than the town meeting form and not lose the inherent democracy of a well-prepared town meeting. Our Commission is intrigued with the idea that COPC can perform many of the functions of a council form and yet still work with the town Meeting form. That would be the impetus of adding to the powers of COPC.