Before proceeding to the preparation of the formal text of the charter amendments 'fleshing out' the provisions we are considering, the committee is seeking your reaction to its preliminary conclusions by presenting the ideas in 'plain language.'

The recommendations fall into three divisions: first, changes in the executive administrative branch of the government; second, changes in the legislative branch of the government; and third, changes in other charter provisions.

1: Changes in the Executive-Administrative Branch of the Government

The Charter Review Committee is considering the elimination of the present three member Board of County Commissioners and to establish, in its place, the position of County Executive, a single person who would perform all of the functions now exercised by the three commissioners, acting jointly.

The principal function of the Board of County Commissioners is to act as 'policy makers' for the county. It has been said that: "When two or more people agree all the time and on all the issues, that is clear evidence one person is doing all the thinking." It is natural, and appropriate, for a multiple member body to have disagreements but these lead to agreements based on compromise, which in the main, dilute or distort policy decisions.

The charter review committee intends to retain the position of County Administrator.

The Charter Review Committee believes the County Executive position, because it will be elected by the voters of Barnstable County, will give a focus and sense of direction to the county and the conduct of its business that, until now, has been lacking, inconsistent, or even, at times, at odds with itself.

The Charter Review Committee believes the County Executive position would fill at least these three (sorely needed) facilitative roles:

(1) to coordinate the activities of other county officers, officials and employees, by serving as liaison between the appointed County Administrator and the members of the legislative branch, fostering a sense of cohesion among the members of the legislative branch and executive branch and in educating the public concerning the needs and prospects of the county

(2) to provide policy guidance through the setting of goals for the legislative branch and advocating the adoption of policies that address the county's problems and opportunities to the legislative branch and to the county's voters;
(3) to act as an ambassador to promote the county through public appearances, and through the communications media; to represent the county in its dealings with the state and federal governments in seeking financial and other assistance; to explain the unique problems and special needs of Barnstable County; and to meet regularly (and often) with the governing officials of the towns which comprise the county.

2: Changes in the Legislative Branch of the Government

The charter review committee believes that in consideration of the broad scope of powers given to the legislative body that the charter must provide for a legislative body which is truly representative of the people who make up the county.

The charter review committee recognizes the strong tie to the existing system of town-based representation in the legislative branch, and it respects this view. It has, however, reluctantly, concluded that the 'one person-one vote' requirements of the state and federal constitutions would be better served by the substitution of a system of districts containing a reasonably equal number of inhabitants, each member casting a vote of the same weight and significance as that cast by every other member.

The town based system, and its concomitant necessity to use 'weighted voting', has also been criticized because of the possibility that exists that a small number of 'urbanized' towns (as few as four) could dominate the voting and out vote the other 11 towns, at their will. That it has not happened routinely to date, is no assurance it will never happen. The towns of the lower cape are highly vulnerable and exposed under the existing system. Logic and fairness demand that the voters if these towns be given the same, equal ability to participate in the affairs of the county in the legislative branch as do the voters of every other town.

The charter review committee believes that legislators chosen from districts containing an essentially equal number of inhabitants would be superior to our present system which substitutes representation of a unit of government for representation of the people who comprise the county.

On a national basis, the single member district system is widely recognized as the most representative way in which to elect members to the county governing body. The single member district system, with each district containing relatively equal number of inhabitants, has been recognized by the courts as the system most likely to be in accord with the one person-one vote doctrine.

If there is another regional government in the United States which employs a legislative representation system like that used in Barnstable County, the committee has been unable to find it.
3: **Changes in other provisions of the Barnstable County Charter.**

(a) Simplification: The County Charter has been criticized because some of its provisions have details that might better be contained in an ordinance. The Charter Review Committee intends to review these provisions and to make appropriate recommendations.

(b) Enforcement: The County Charter has been criticized because its provisions are not always followed. The Charter Review Committee intends to review the charter provisions and these criticisms. The Charter Review Committee will make appropriate recommendations to address this problem.

(c) Recall: The County Charter has been criticized because it does not contain a "recall" provision. The Charter Review Committee will make appropriate recommendations to address this problem.

(d) Name Change: The County Charter has been criticized because it names the legislative branch as the Assembly of Delegates. This title seems to contribute to the legislators being seen to be representatives of the municipality rather than as representatives of voters. Many, because the title is so misunderstood, don't understand what functions and duties the body is responsible to provide. The Charter Review Committee intends to recommend the name be changed, possibly to County Council.