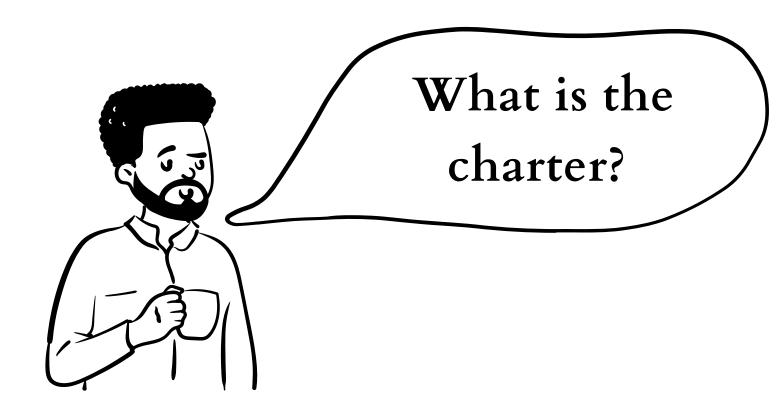
Charters 101



The charter is the document that defines Somerville's government organization, powers, and functions. It is essentially the constitution – the most important document for the city.



What is charter review?

Charter review is a process when a City or Town evaluates how well its charter reflects the needs of its residents. Charter review can happen because a charter is outdated, its government structure no longer aligns with its residents values, or for many other reasons.



Why is charter review happening now?

Mayor Curtatone and City Council President
Matthew McLaughlin started the charter review
process in December 2020. Somerville's Charter
hasn't been updated since the 1800s. We want to
make sure that the charter makes sense for
Somerville in 2021.



What is the current Somerville form of government?

Somerville has a Strong Mayor - City Council form of government. Our Mayor, the head of the executive branch, is elected by the voters and has power over the majority of Somerville's decisions. Our City Council, the legislative branch, is made up of 11 Councilors representing the 7 Wards plus 4 At-Large members.



How does the charter affect me?

A charter controls:

how Somerville helps you
how you are represented
term limits
who in Somerville has certain responsibilities
who is responsible to who

if people are appointed or elected

the budget process