The county’s post-World War II population boom, along with changes in industry, generated a challenge of representation. Community expansion was unequal throughout the county, with towns and cities in western Dutchess growing at a markedly higher rate than those in the east. The board of supervisors model, granting one voice to each community, was increasingly out of touch with the county’s needs as a whole. A 1950 state assembly act granting county governments the power to pass local laws added further pressure for reform.

The Charter of 1967 addressed the representation problem by creating a legislative body, known as the Dutchess County Board of Representatives, to replace the board of supervisors. The representatives were elected separately from the supervisors, using new districts that better reflected Dutchess’ population distribution. Without responsibilities as municipal administrators, the representatives were primed to focus on their roles in the new policy-making branch of County Government.

The Board of Supervisors turned to drafting an administrative code outlining the daily operations of the new governmental structure. The board retained the firm of C. W. Robinson Inc. to aid in the process. Seen here in the large caucus room of the county office building were the key members of the work group (l-r): Elting Burger Sr., Clerk of the Board of Supervisors; Donald Spanier, the president of C. W. Robinson Inc.; David C. Schoentag, chairman of the board of supervisors; and Dr. Jack I. Lippman, chairman of the Charter Commission.

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