Minutes
Town Council Steering Committee Meeting
June 24, 2019
Town Hall Annex

1. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.
   Present: Joan Lewis, Julie Blanchard, Matthew O’Brien
   Also present: John Elsesser, Town Manager
   Absent: Jonathan Hand (Joan Lewis seated)

2. Acceptance of Minutes:
   Matthew O’Brien moved to accept the minutes of the Steering Committee meeting on May 28, 2019, seconded by Julie Blanchard. The following corrections were requested:
   a. Page 3, item 7, 6th line: remove the “s” at the end of “services.
   The motion to accept the minutes as amended carried on unanimous vote.

3. Reports:
   A. Committee Chair: None.
   B. Committee Members: None.
   C. Review/Discussion: Vacancy Reports: Julie Blanchard noted on page 2 under the Local Emergency Coordinating Committee that John Alosky is listed as having a life term. That doesn’t make sense. She also asked about Special Constable because it appears that there is another seat that is unneeded. John Elsesser will have the Town Clerk review the software. Matthew asked about the starting terms for Inland Wetlands because it appears they are all the same. John Elsesser replied that it depends on when they were appointed.

4. Reappointments:
   Matthew O’Brien moved to recommend the reappointment of John Willnauer to the Building Code Board of Appeals, term to expire 6/1/2023. The motion was seconded by Julie Blanchard. Matthew noted that Mr. Willnauer didn’t complete the party affiliation line of the form. John Elsesser replied perhaps that is because it is a reappointment so this information is already known. The motion to recommend the reappointment carried on unanimous vote.

5. Appointments:
   A. Matthew O’Brien moved to recommend the appointment of Joshua Gemmell to the Building Code Board of Appeals, term to expire 6/2/2020. Julie Blanchard seconded the motion. Joan Lewis asked how often this committee meets. John Elsesser replied that they are required to meet once a year. The motion to recommend the appointment carried on unanimous vote.

   B. Arianna Mouradjian could not be present at the meeting to discuss her appointment to the Planning & Zoning Commission. The Committee will try to meet with her on July 22nd.

6. Consideration/Possible Action: Establishment of a Senior Housing Study Committee and Development of Charge:
   Matthew O’Brian had some suggestions about how to proceed with this initiative. He thinks the first task should be to determine need. Joan Lewis noted that the recent Livability Survey indicated a shortage of housing for younger people too. Matthew said he thinks we need to establish that there is a market need that could attract a developer. He suggested revising the charge to make that the first task, because although there might be 12 people who want to do something, it doesn’t mean it is a widespread marketable thing. He also wants the committee to present a report to the Town Council before they move forward and hold public forums.
Discussion ensued about the potential cost to do formal market research vs. public forums and the establishment of a budget for this committee. John Elsesser said another thing to keep in mind is that zoning trends are moving away from population-specific housing as being discriminatory. Further discussion took place as to whether this should be attainable housing vs. senior-only. Matthew said we could do some public forums before taking care of this fee schedule separate from the ordinance. John Elsesser said he is ready to proceed with this. John Elsesser said that our labor attorney Ken Plumb did this draft with a review of mark-ups done over the years. He believes they are at the point where the Council could adopt them, but there are imbedded policy changes. Some of the fees need to go up. John said he thinks there is an adequate process where the Council can do it, but an ordinance is more cumbersome. Matthew asked if there could be a mechanism in the ordinance for changing the fee schedule rather than changing the ordinance. John said we could start with an amendment of ordinance as provided by Bud Meyers. The actual fee schedule could be reviewed separately after reviewing comparison information. The committee will continue to review this item.

7. Consideration/possible action: Amendments to Cemetery Ordinance:
Joan Lewis noted that the sexton position’s duties seem more administrative now, with Public Works taking care of the physical tasks. John Elsesser replied that we are phasing in taking on more responsibilities. Grave digging is contracted out. This avoids passing on overtime costs to people who are burying their relatives. Joan asked who actually makes sure that the cemeteries are maintained. John replied the Director of Public Works - Mark Kiefer. This is not something the sexton needs to be charged with. The sexton will bring items to Public Works’ attention, but that doesn’t need to be in the ordinance.

Matthew suggested a revision at the top of page 2, to change “no deceased person shall be interred until the sexton or a commission member” to “authorized member.” He also asked about the quorum, which says majority. The committee has five members – can they meet if three members are absent? He proposed to make quorum three members. Julie Blanchard agreed. John will re-write that section. John said that the substantial change was that the original ordinance indicates they shall not get any money from the Town. That has not been the case since he has been here. They have a budget for maintenance and a fund balance of approx. $20,000. Matthew noted under item B on page 4, it says “the commission shall have the authority to define the duties of a competent sexton.” John said the sexton is a town employee, so we should remove or rewrite that language. Duties defined by the ordinance should come out. He also doesn’t think the commission should have the authority to contract. He will re-work that section. Once we made that position a town employee it changes how they are hired and who they report to. John will make preliminary changes for the Town Attorney’s review, and come back to Steering for a final review.

8. Consideration/Possible Action: Modifications to Ordinances: Inspection/Permit, Open Burning:
Matthew O’Brien asked if we agreed to set the fee schedule separate from the ordinance. John Elsesser replied it is the attorney’s preference to include it, but then it is costly to amend it. Joan Lewis said it seems clear that the fees need to go up. John said he thinks there is an adequate process where the Council can do it, but an ordinance is more cumbersome. Matthew asked if there could be a mechanism in the ordinance for changing the fee schedule rather than changing the ordinance. John said we could start with an amendment of ordinance as provided by Bud Meyers. The actual fee schedule could be reviewed separately after reviewing comparison information. The committee will continue to review this item.

9. Consideration/ Possible Action: Proposed Revisions to Personnel Policies and Procedures:
Joan Lewis asked if we are ready to proceed with this. John Elsesser said that our labor attorney Ken Plumb did this draft with a review of mark-ups done over the years. He believes they are at the point where the Council could adopt them, but there are imbedded policy changes. Some of
the substantive differences include the elimination of the Personnel Appeals Board because the attorney feels that function is done by the Town Council. The Personnel Appeals Board has never convened. There are no rules or bylaws for it. The rest of the changes are to benefit levels. This covers the 8-9 non-union employees, and if they are treated substantially differently they could unionize. Matthew asked if the purchasing regulations are different. John said yes, they are updated for modern times. We could have Attorney Plumb come in if the committee wants to discuss this further. Joan asked if we have any guidance about where things are substantially different from the union. John replied he hasn’t done that matrix. He thinks it is proportional and appropriate. The Council spent a lot of time on it when it was done in 1991. It was agreed that the Steering Committee will review this further and list any specific questions to address.

10. **Adjournment:**
   The meeting was adjourned at 8:19 PM on a motion by Matthew O’Brien, seconded by Julie Blanchard and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone
Town Council Clerk