Minutes
Town Council Steering Committee Special Meeting
July 22, 2019
Town Hall Annex

1. The meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM.
   Present: Jonathan Hand, Matthew O’Brien, Joan Lewis, Julie Blanchard (arrived 6:33 PM – Joan Lewis seated for vote on acceptance of minutes)
   Also present: John Elsesser, Town Manager; Amanda Backhaus, Finance Director

2. Acceptance of Minutes:
   Joan Lewis moved to accept the minutes of the Steering Committee meeting on June 24, 2019. The motion was seconded by Matthew O’Brien. The following correction was requested: Page 2, item 7, second paragraph, second line: add “of the commission” after “authorized member.” The motion to accept the minutes as corrected carried on unanimous vote.

Julie Blanchard arrived at the meeting at 6:33 PM.

3. Reports:
   A. Committee Chair – Jonathan Hand: No report.
   B. Committee Members: No reports.
   C. Review of Vacancy/Board & Commission Reports: Jonathan Hand said he has reviewed the monthly reports and we still have some openings.

4. Resignations/Not Wishing to be Reappointed:
   a. Susan Pollinger has resigned from the Zoning Board of Appeals as she has moved away from town. Matthew O’Brien moved to accept the Pollinger resignation with thanks for her service. The motion was seconded by Julie Blanchard and carried on unanimous vote.

5. Appointments:
   a. Cemetery Commission – Messier: Jonathan Hand moved to recommend the appointment of Mark Messier to the Cemetery Commission, term to expire 10/17/2021. The motion was seconded by Matthew O’Brien and carried on unanimous vote. Jonathan suggested that it may be helpful to have a drop-down list on the Statement of Interest form to make it easier for candidates to select the Board or Commission that they are interested in. Laura will check to see if this can be done.
   b. Energy Conservation/Alternative Energy Committee: Jonathan Hand moved to recommend the appointment of Cameron Crutch to the Energy Conservation/Alternative Energy Committee, term to expire 3/1/2021. The motion was seconded by Matthew O’Brien and carried on unanimous vote.
   c. Planning & Zoning Commission Alternate – Mouradjian: Ms. Mouradjian was not present for an interview, which the Committee prefers to do for candidates to major land use boards. Matthew O’Brien moved to table consideration of this appointment, seconded by Julie Blanchard and unanimously approved.

6. Consideration/Possible Action: Amendment To Cemetery Ordinance:
   Joan Lewis said we did quite a bit of work on this item at the last meeting. Amanda Backhaus said that the Town Attorney has reviewed it and has suggested changes as indicated with the agenda materials. Matthew O’Brien noted that changes were made from the original draft in Section 2281, Purchase of Burial Rights, which says, “Such rights are not transferable.” John Elsesser said it is a right to use, not a deed. Those cause problems and we stopped doing it.
Amanda suggested substitute language of, “non-transferable by sale.” John’s preference would be to recommend the modifications to the Council subject to the Cemetery Commission’s review. He thinks they should see it again. Amanda said that the Commission meets on Thursday. Joan Lewis asked if it can just go to the Council for approval then. John replied that it will depend on how many questions come up. Matthew asked about the use of funds. John said there are two funds - Operating and Reserve. He also has some concerns about land acquisition. He is not sure the Commission has rights to acquire. The original ordinance predates the Town Charter. Amanda suggested striking acquisition of land. Julie Blanchard noted that we also need to strike the succeeding sections at the end. Matthew said under 22-3, sub item 3, to add the word “to” before town treasurer. Matthew O’Brien moved to table this matter for further review. The motion was seconded by Jonathan Hand and carried on unanimous vote.

7. Consideration/Possible Action: Establishment of a Senior Housing Study Committee and Development of Charge:
The Committee discussed the most revisions of this document, which were emailed in advance of the meeting. Matthew O’Brien said he thought we weren’t going to do a needs assessment because it costs money. John replied we would not be doing a formal needs assessment. Since the term has meaning, he suggested changing “needs assessment” to “assess the needs of the community,” or “Conduct an assessment of community needs.” It was also agreed to change the wording to indicate Boards & Commissions recommend potential members, and to strike a “representative of EDC” and have three members at large, one of which will have development experience. Matthew O’Brien questioned the need for five members present for a quorum. He suggests four members for a quorum unless it must include at-large members. Jonathan Hand said he is comfortable with a quorum of five, because then at least one at-large member must participate. Jonathan Hand moved to recommend the charge to the Senior Housing Study Committee as amended to the Town Council. The motion was seconded by Matthew O’Brien and carried on unanimous vote.

8. Consideration/Possible Action: Modifications to Ordinances: Inspection/Permit, Open Burning:
Jonathan Hand said this is a lot of material to review. Joan Lewis agreed, and asked if there is any way we can just address items pertaining to the fees. The other items raise a lot of questions. Matthew O’Brien said we had talked about doing it all at once, but the more he reads it the more reluctant he is to approve it. Jonathan said he is similarly concerned. He doesn’t want to lose sight of the safety aspects, but the extent of regulation is a concern. He thinks we need something that aligns more with the rural nature of our town and what our townspeople’s expectations are. John Elsesser said we could send it back to the Fire Marshal for more work. Matthew asked if we can get a sense for the number of complaints. Jonathan said in looking at the list of towns supplied, we might be dissimilar. John said we do have issues with ceremonial fires and how large they get, when what people are really doing is burning brush. He knows about complaints from people with health issues. Matthew said he is confused about the section pertaining to penalties. They are different and he is not sure he wants to send anyone to jail. John suggested referring it back to the Fire Marshal for something simpler that reflects the country atmosphere of our town. Jonathan Hand moved to return the proposed modifications to the Fire Marshal for further work. The motion was seconded by Matthew O’Brien and carried on unanimous vote.

9. Consideration/Possible Action: Proposed Revisions to Personnel Policies and Procedures:
Joan Lewis said she asked Council members to look at it this, and probably nobody has had time with their summer schedules. Perhaps we should ask again. She was trying to look at the different colors of document edits. When we refer to the Town having the ability to change guidelines at any time, she thinks it should specify the Town Council. Amanda Backhaus suggested that
Steering break the document into sections and address a couple of sections at each meeting over the next few months. Joan said she thinks it reads well but she needs more time with it. Matthew O’Brien asked if we should be focusing on language, policy decisions or both. John Elsesser replied both. It was agreed to review the document as follows: August meeting: sections 1-8, September meeting: sections 9-11 and October meeting: sections 12-15, with a goal of recommending the revised document to the Town Council for their November 4, 2019 meeting. Amanda noted that some of the appendices are very outdated and also need work. Jonathan Hand moved to proceed with the proposed schedule for review. The motion was seconded by Matthew O’Brien and carried on unanimous vote.

10. **Adjournment:**
Matthew O’Brien moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:19 PM. The motion was seconded by Julie Blanchard and carried on unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Laura Stone
Town Council Clerk