



Residents' Advisory Committee
March 14, 2019 – 12:00 noon
Town Room, Town Hall
4 Boltwood Avenue

Minutes

Members present: Keisha Dennis, Connie Kruger, Jim Pistrang

Others present: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Community Participation Officer Angela Mills

Members of the Public: Town Councilor Darcy DuMont

The meeting began at 12:00 noon with introductions of those present, as this was the first meeting of the Committee. Each person introduced themselves and their previous involvement in Town government and the community.

Discussion

Mr. Bockelman reviewed the Charge of the Committee and the reference in the Amherst Home Rule Charter about the Residents' Advisory Committee. He noted that the only reference in the Charter stated: "The Town Manager shall establish a Residents' Advisory Committee to assist with evaluation and selection of candidates for appointment."

There was discussion as to the role and purpose of the Committee. Ms. Kruger described the process used previously by the Select Board in reviewing appointments. Mr. Pistrang described his practice when he had appointments as Town Moderator. Mr. Bockelman noted that this Committee was advisory to the Town Manager in making appointments. He distinguished its role from that of the Community Participation Officers, who are engaged with recruiting people to serve on committees, among other duties.

The Town Attorney has determined that, since the Residents' Advisory Committee is called for in the Charter, its meetings are public meetings.

There was discussion about discussing names of applicants for volunteer boards or committees in public. Ms. Dennis said such a practice would limit the pool of candidates and noted that it would have made her less inclined to put her name forward for this Committee. Ms. Kruger said she agreed that making all

applicants public would have a negative impact on the volunteer process. She believed there was a balance to be sought between having full transparency with all names being public and having a successful outreach effort that included all members of the community. The members agreed that while the Committee's meetings were public, names of all candidates should not be discussed or released to the public until an appointment was to be made.

The Committee members discussed their views of the Charter requirement that the Town Manager "shall seek to appoint individuals with relevant experience. The Town Manager shall establish policies and practices to actively encourage a diverse pool of applicants for multiple-member bodies."

Mr. Bockelman noted that he was preparing to interview candidates for the Energy and Climate Action Committee. He requested that one member of the Committee volunteer to participate in all of the interviews, which would be a major time commitment of 8-10 hours as there were over 20 applicants for the seven positions.

The Committee determined that it would not elect officers at this meeting and may consider doing so at the next meeting.

Public Comment

Ms. DuMont noted that she was speaking as an individual and not representing the Town Council. She asked if there was a way to request information on income on the Community Activity Form to encourage appointments of people with a broad range of incomes. She said that having renters represented on committees was an important value. In addition, she encouraged the Town Manager to expedite the appointment of members of the Energy and Climate Action Committee.

Next Meeting

The members discussed their preferred times for meeting and agreed that the next meeting would be March 26th at 10:00 a.m.

The members requested that the following material be provided for the next meeting:

- List of all committees and membership
- List of all vacancies
- **Prioritization of committees needing appointments – this was added to the minutes by Ms. Kruger at the 3-26-2019 RAC meeting before minutes were approved by a vote of the RAC**

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Paul Bockelman

Town Manager