



**Residents' Advisory Committee (RAC)
April 9, 2019 – 10:00 AM
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall
4 Boltwood Avenue**

Minutes

Members present: Keisha Dennis, Connie Kruger, Jim Pistrang (Chair of the Residents' Advisory Committee)

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

Members of the Public: Meg Gage, member of the Charter Commission (arrived at 10:23 am - after meeting started)

Call to Order: 10:02 am

Discussion

Ms. Kruger asked the Chair if the members could get the agenda a day or two in advance of the meeting posting and offer suggestions or changes.

Mr. Pistrang explained that in the future he would endeavor to send the agenda to the members a day or two in advance.

Review of Minutes: No additions nor modification to the minutes. *The vote was unanimous to approve minutes of the RAC meeting of 3-26-2019.*

Review of the agenda for 4/9/2019: term limits, review and discuss the selection process for the Energy and Climate Action Committee (ECAC), discuss the possibility of meeting with the Town Council subcommittee on Outreach, Communications and Appointments (OCA) and Community Participation Officers (CPOs).

Term Limits Discussion: Ms. Kruger asked Mr. Bockelman to share the memo written by Select Board Chair Doug Slaughter regarding the suggestion for board and committee appointee term limits (two consecutive terms or six years). She would like copies of this memo distributed to the members of the RAC. Ms. Kruger explained the Select Board's process and philosophy as it pertained to the interview and selection process for Town Boards and Committees. The Select Board sought to increase the vibrancy of boards/committees/commissions and the practical solution became the use of a stated suggestion of two consecutive terms or six-years (whichever came first). The downside of this

suggested term limit was that sometimes you lost some terrific people and the culture of the committee shifted due to a change in leadership. The exceptions to these term limits happened when it became difficult for boards and committees to find people who wanted to serve.

Mr. Pistrang asked if the exceptions came from the committee or if the exceptions came from the suggestion of the Select Board members. Ms. Kruger answered that it happened in both directions.

Ms. Dennis stated that she liked the idea of term limits. It encouraged people outside of the system to get involved. She further mentioned that when people from the outside see sameness in the leadership across boards and committees it does not always make them feel “invited to the table.”

Mr. Bockelman agreed with Ms. Dennis and he mentioned that he enjoyed seeing turnover. He noted that boards and committees sometimes get too comfortable and that an exterior force like stated term limits help force some new membership that can be good for board and committee success.

Ms. Kruger noted that some people have termed off a board or committee and then reapplied a year later. She noted that sometimes staff liaisons also developed a certain comfort level with certain individuals over time and thereby suggested that they reapply.

Mr. Pistrang shared his experiences with the Finance Committee appointments during the former government organization (Town Meeting, Select Board and Town Manager). He sought out individuals with a terrific work ethic. In addition, the technical side of the numbers involved a certain level of nuance and steep learning curve. He noticed that it sometimes became easier to stick with people he knew instead of actively going out and finding new people with this very specific skill set and affinity for numbers.

Ms. Kruger pointed out that the Select Board would have pushed back and challenged the reappointment of the same people over time. She highlighted that talented people in our community could term off one board and then go out in the greater community and use their talents elsewhere.

Mr. Bockelman suggested that the RAC could make suggestions to the Town Manager as to whether or not term limits would be a good idea moving forward.

It was formalized by consensus that the RAC supports term limit of two consecutive terms or six years, with the understanding that exceptions may occur depending on the board/committee.

Ms. Kruger brought up the suggestion from the previous Town Council meeting public comment suggestion that the RAC meet with OCA and CPOs soon.

Discussion of the ECAC interview and appointment process: Mr. Bockelman interviewed a bunch of people and is currently working on a memo to give his selections to the Town Council. During these interviews Ms. Stephanie Ciccarello (Sustainability Coordinator), Ms. Kruger (RAC) and Mr. Bockelman met with candidates in the Town Manager’s office in Town Hall.

They used a set list of questions and then utilized a matrix for grading of candidates. The process revealed that we live in a town full of very qualified individuals. Ms. Ciccarello, Ms. Kruger, and Mr. Bockelman made a point of meeting outside of the scheduled interview hours to discuss the candidates’ qualifications. People on the interview committee brought their own style (written narrative, sticky

notes, affective scale) to the discussion. Ms. Kruger noted that they reached consensus at the end of their discussion. Mr. Bockelman will write the summary memo to the Town Councilors and then follow-up with phone calls to the applicant pool.

10:23 am – entrance of community member Ms. Meg Gage to the meeting space

Ms. Kruger noted that there were enough qualified people in the applicant pool to put together two full ECACs. She felt the interview committee did a thorough job of weighing the strengths of the applicants and creating a balanced committee.

Ms. Kruger suggested that in the future the RAC discuss the interview process as an opportunity to collect demographic information. Should they pay attention to the gender diversity? Diversity across age groups? The RAC sees this type of information collection as part of their charge.

Ms. Kruger noted that she enjoyed the ECAC interview process but would happily share the next few board and committee interview opportunities with Ms. Dennis and Mr. Pistrang.

Mr. Bockelman reviewed the tiered approach to adding individuals to Town Manager appointed boards and committees:

Tier I: Council on Aging, Historical Commission, Local Historic District Commission

Tier II: Human Rights Commission (HRC), Conservation Commission (ConCom), Leisure Services and Supplemental Education Commission (LSSE), Downtown Parking Working Group (DPWG)

Tier III: Trustees for Affordable Housing, Cultural Council, Agricultural Commission, Design Review Board, Shade Tree Committee, Public Art, Design Review Board, Board of Health

Mr. Bockelman mentioned that the candidate pools for all of these boards and committees is healthy in size. He then posited the question: What will be the role of RAC in these upcoming appointments? Mr. Bockelman welcomed outside input. He recommended that the same individual from RAC attend a complete set of interviews and offer input.

The RAC and Mr. Bockelman coordinated which RAC member would cover the upcoming Tier I interviews.

Ms. Kruger encouraged the RAC members to share their list of interview questions and attempt to cover the same information for each applicant. She mentioned that she found a printed list of questions very helpful.

Mr. Bockelman noted that the Chair of the existing board or committee to start the interview. The first question is usually, “why did you express interest in serving?”

Public Comment – Ms. Meg Gage

Ms. Gage apologized for arriving late to the meeting. She stated that she appreciated the work that the members of RAC are doing. She asked them to examine the way that all committees work together in our Town. She suggested that best practice includes “hiring the most talented person in the pool.” She shared a mechanism that she used to use in her previous employment to enrich the talent pool for open positions. She recommended that we start building a diversity database of emails and keep adding to it

over time so that when vacancies happen on boards and committees we have a standing network of individuals to reach immediately and ask for assistance in outreach. She would like RAC and CPOs to reach out to the Cambodian Community, the rental communities, and a more diverse group for all boards and committees. She noted that when it comes to picking people for vacancies “people know the people they know” so it would be helpful to reach out initially to a more diverse group of people. She shared that 40% of her staff at her previous place of employment were people of color.

Ms. Gage also referenced a one-year and/or three-year review of appointment practices – as mentioned in the Town Charter.

Ms. Kruger noted for the group that this is the third meeting of RAC. Each person at the table has already committed to helping create a robust and diverse candidate pool. In addition, she suggested that the conversations about what constitutes diversity have been informative. She stated that, in her opinion, it would be more difficult to achieve diversity of class than it will be to reflect racial diversity on our boards and committees. She stressed that the challenge remains how to engage people who choose not to participate.

Ms. Gage suggested that when Town Meeting was still taking place, people did a good job of identifying talented individuals and getting them on board and moving upwards in the leadership ranks.

Mr. Bockelman mentioned that Community Participation Officers (CPOs) see their role more broadly, as a welcoming force for community members to volunteer in both big and small ways. The May 4th one-day town clean up initiative is an example of a stand-alone event that encourages active community members to give a few morning hours to clean up the town we share. Hosting a block party or a potluck are two other ways that community members volunteer their talents and help bring people together.

The RAC agreed that it would be important to meet with OCA and CPOs in the coming weeks.

Next Meeting: 04/23/2019 at 10:00am – CPOs will be invited to attend. Mr. Bockelman will reach out to the OCA and coordinate a meeting with the RAC.

Other items:

Mr. Pistrang received a direct phone call from a member of a committee that has a bevy of volunteers. They are able to conduct business at their meetings because their membership numbers are well above quorum plus one. However, this individual has a friend who has been attending the board meetings and wants to be appointed so that their vote at meetings can be counted. Should we appoint people to boards and committees without an interview? Can we just appoint people?

Mr. Bockelman suggested that it is important to meet community members before appointing them to boards/committees/commissions. Mr. Pistrang mentioned that the individual had submitted a CAF over a year ago during the transition of government.

Ms. Dennis noted that she did not think it would be a good idea to just go ahead and appoint individuals to boards and committees simply because they are interested. It is important to think about how the board and committees are currently functioning as a unit.

Ms. Kruger recommended that RAC conceive of a consistent protocol for appointments. One vacancy with one person to fill it means that it is time for more community outreach in order to fill that one vacancy.

Mr. Bockelman asked Mr. Pistrang if the Dog Park Task Force (DPTF) needed more members and Mr. Pistrang replied “yes.” The DPTF would like to continue until the dog park is built and then they will form a “Friends of the Dog Park” group to continue maintaining the space.

Mr. Bockelman notified the RAC members that a member of the community has placed a public records request for every CAF submitted since 12/1/2018 and all correspondence regarding the CAFs. Mr. Bockelman promised to keep the members of RAC informed regarding this public records request.

Ms. Kruger mentioned that she was made aware that the members of OCA have met with Town Attorney (KP Law). She is wondering if it will be legally possible that the OCA and RAC will see all of the CAFs – not just the CAFs for appointees.

Mr. Bockelman explained that the Town Attorney has reached out to the Attorney Generals’ Office for clarification on the status of CAFs and whether or not it is permissible to share them with the public.

Proposed agenda items:

- View a copy of the memo from Chair Mr. Slaughter of the Select Board to the Town Council regarding appointments to committees and boards.
- Talk to OCA and CPOs regarding intersection of goals and strategies for diversification of applicant pool.
- Set calendar for upcoming meetings.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Mills
Community Participation Officer