



**Residents' Advisory Committee
May 7, 2019 – 10:00am
First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall
4 Boltwood Avenue**

Minutes

Members present: Ms. Keisha Dennis, Ms. Connie Kruger, Mr. Jim Pistrang

Others present: Town Manager Paul Bockelman, Community Participation Officers (CPO): Brianna Sunryd, Jennifer Moyston and Angela Mills

Members of the Public: None

Meeting called to order by Mr. Pistrang at 10:06 am

Recap of Recent Interviews:

Conservation Commission candidates came in yesterday – all fascinating and entertaining people

A few people interviewed for LSSE commission and there are only two vacancies

Discussions regarding the strength and size of the candidate pools

How to describe the interview pool?

How to construct the meaning of ‘the pool?’

Is it just people who self-submit their information?

People who are encouraged to apply?

Only the people who eventually get to an interview?

Does the size of the initial interview pool matter?

Honest feedback for all applicants is key. Ms. Kruger would like to withhold the communication piece until after a conversation with OCA members to land on a ‘team approach’ to how we refer to applicant pool and the number of interviewees’ vs number appointed.

Ms. Dennis sees both sides of the issue. Disparages the idea that only certain people are invited to apply. When the pool is made public and the people appointed it might be helpful for transparency to have numbers made public.

How do we keep the person who does not get picked involved?

All RAC members agreed not to talk about numbers until after a conversation with OCA about how they are handling the process.

Ms. Kruger checked in regarding Historic Commission and Local Historic District Commission and she referenced the scheduling issues with two Chairs and the liaison from the staff. Very friendly “horse-trading” between Chairs to ensure that the people selected will help complete the work of both Commission.

Information on the CAF was sketchy when the individual checked off four or five Boards and Committees on their CAF.

Approval of previous minutes

Motion made by Ms. Kruger to approve minutes of 4/23.

Unanimous vote.

Upcoming RAC Assignments

Mr. Bockelman explained that the next two Committees/Commissions/Boards would be: Ranked Choice Voting and Participatory Budgeting

These will be joint interviews with Town Council Representative

There is no chair or existing staff yet since these committees/ boards do not yet exist.

Participatory Budget – Town Manager appoints three and the Town Council has three appointments to make

Ranked-Choice Voting – Town Manager appoints three members, the Town Council appoints two, and Council has a member who serves as well

May 15th 2:30 – 4pm RCV [No person from RAC is available]

May 16th 10:30am – Noon Part Budget [Ms. Kruger]

TRY FOR MORNINGS on the FOLLOWING:

Affordable Housing Trust

Cultural Council

Public Art

Shade Tree

RAC has been invited to appear on ‘Byline’ with Stan Rosenberg at AmherstMedia. Ms. Adrienne Terrizzi invited Mr. Pistrang. He would be happy to change his mind if the members of RAC object. Ms. Kruger would prefer all three members of RAC to appear to give input from the entire Committee. She would prefer all of them.

It was noted that if it were all of them or just two of them, it would be a public posted meeting. Complicated when it is a publically posted meeting. Mr. Pistrang, as Chair, feels like he can handle the interview. Mr. Pistrang will discuss the necessity for transparency and the importance of getting people from the community more active in government. Ms. Kruger trusts Mr. Pistrang will handle the interview but she also feels since RAC is a new entity they should discuss opportunities like this. Ms. Dennis has no interest in appearing on ‘Byline.’ She opined that it is more important to do the work than to talk about the work.

Ms. Kruger asked CPOs how their experience was at the 'Byline' taping. Ms. Sunryd explained that they broke up the CPO team – Ms. Sunryd went 1:1 with Stan and then Jen and Angela went afterwards with Stan. Jennifer explained how the CPOs overlapped in their jobs.

Mr. Bockelman explained that the studio only has two cameras. It is a very small area.

Mr. Pistrang will do the interview.

Public Comment – None

Additional Topics that did not make the agenda:

Six years or two consecutive terms? How does RAC feel about the term of four years? Should they be eligible for a second term that would take them to 7 years?

Ms. Kruger understood it as two terms or six years. There could be exceptions if the chair wrote to the appointing authority to ask for an extension.

Volunteers for Boards and Committees can cycle out and come back. There is no official cooling off period. Mr. Bockelman explained that certain boards have a built up a knowledge base – Board of Assessors – where the term limits might be different.

Ms. Kruger asked if this is something that should be discussed with OCA members?

The term limit idea was a Select Board policy carry-over. RAC should recommend a 'best practice' to Mr. Bockelman.

Ms. Kruger explained that she had a conversation with a former committee member regarding why a committee member should or should not have a seventh year. Whatever the practice becomes the continuity of the board or committee needs to feed from the entire candidate pool. Leadership vacuum is often the given reason for keeping people on after two terms.

Mr. Bockelman sees a logjam occurring when people do not term off Boards and Committees. Mr. Pistrang asked if the policy should read 'lesser of the two' between two terms or six years. What would be the better practice? Let people have their two terms even if it is seven years. Ms. Kruger believes that keeping to six years for consistency purposes is important.

Ms. Moyston explained that you can run a report and the database will track appointment date through the actual end date and the term end date.

Ms. Kruger noted that sometimes the list of peoples' terms is inaccurate. Mr. Bockelman would like to say 'two full terms' for consistency. A four plus three would be ok – a one-year plus three plus three would be OK. Six years is a good guideline. When people do not get a second term, it is important to explain to them, diplomatically as possible, the reason their service is no longer needed. It becomes a thorny issue when the messaging across the community is not positive.

Mr. Pistrang agrees with Mr. Bockelman's practice of two full terms or a maximum of six years.

Scheduling of future RAC meetings:

Agreed to meet every two weeks through the end of May and into June.

Springtime is a busy appointing time. Interviews and figuring things out and every week is a little different. Important to puzzle through this process with people. The role of the RAC is an important piece of Town Manager appointments to Boards/Committees. View RAC as a great mechanism for vetting of candidates.

Tuesday, May 21st 10am – next RAC meeting.

Mr. Bockelman presented the RAC members with a summary report of demographic data from CAFs.

Ms. Kruger asked Mr. Bockelman to forward the charts that the Town Council created to the RAC members.

Mr. Pistrang noted that the race diversity does not match what our community looks like. Ms. Moyston explained that the Human Resources department is changing the affirmative action hiring plan.

Ms. Kruger mentioned that our awareness of underrepresented groups should merit appointment. In practice, the hiring is working towards balance. Candidate pools do not always reflect the diversity of the community.

Mr. Pistrang asked how we change the applicant pool.

Ms. Kruger asked if CPOs activity and community events helps diversify the applicant pool. Ms. Sunryd responded there is a ladder of engagement and we are laying the groundwork. Where do we need to focus?

Institutional barriers, timing of meetings, transportation, childcare – are some of the barriers that Ms. Sunryd has explained. The role of the CPOs is to build trust. Goal of CPOs is to get people involved in Boards and Committees but also to get involved in government.

Ms. Kruger related her interaction with Ms. Sunryd at Sustainability Fair and noted that there was not a brochure available. Mr. Bockelman explained that noted that when they ask people during interviews how they heard about the opportunity, they mentioned that someone told them to apply. Mr. Pistrang suggested that we create a list of the Boards and Committees that need volunteers. He noted that the more people know, and the more they are being heard, the more they will get involved. Ms. Kruger thinks there should be multiple points of entry.

Ms. Moyston exited at 11:07am

Ms. Kruger watched the Town Council meeting last night and the Town Council approved the ECAC appointments. Ms. Kruger further explained that for the four boards that the Town Council would appoint all 13 members of the Town Council would receive the CAFs for the interview pool for those. All council members see all CAFs for the candidate pool.

Adjourned at 11:10am.

Respectfully Submitted,

Angela Mills

Executive Assistant to the Town Manager and Community Participation Officer