



Memorandum

To: Town Council Members
From: George Ryan, Chair, Governance, Organization and Legislation (GOL) Committee
Date: January 6, 2020
Re: Report by the Chair of GOL Committee to the Town Council

Summary:

Since our last report of December 16, 2019, the GOL Committee has met once, on December 18. At that meeting, GOL revised the language of Rules of Procedure 10.5(h) regarding public comment at Council meetings. The revised rule is included in your packet and a summary of the discussion is below. The revision was approved 4-0 with one member absent (DeAngelis). The Committee also reviewed the "Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Proclamation" and voted it clear, consistent, and actionable by a vote of 4-0 with one absent (De Angelis). Both a clean copy and track-changes copy are in your packet. The committee also continued discussion of possible revisions to the current Town Council Committee structure. A summary of that discussion will be found below. Also included in your packet are a number of documents to give you a sense of what these proposed revisions might look like in practice. You will find these in the PDF entitled "GOL Standing Committee Restructuring Proposal".

Discussion:

Revision to Rules of Procedure 10.5h on public comment at Council committee meetings

At the request of the Chair of OCA the Committee considered a revision to ROP 10.5(h) which governs public comment at Council committee meetings. The current language requires public comment at all Council Committee meetings. Presently OCA is considering a public interview process for appointments to the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) and the Planning Board that would involve calling a special meeting of OCA for the purpose of interviewing applicants for those bodies. It was felt that public comment at a meeting held for such a purpose would not be appropriate. In light of this concern the Committee suggests adding the word "regular" to the beginning of item 'h' so that it would now read: "**Regular** Committee meetings shall provide for a period of public comment." While this change does not prohibit public comment at other Council Committee meetings it does give the chair the option of not allowing public comment where deemed inappropriate. A "regular meeting" was understood by the Committee to be any meeting which is listed in that Committee's yearly calendar.

Possible Revisions to Current Town Council Committee Structure

The Committee has spent a good portion of its last three meetings reviewing the current Town Council committee structure. Why was this review undertaken? It was felt by the committee that the current disposition is not working. In particular it was felt that the burden on CRC was not sustainable. It did

not allow for an equitable sharing of the workload and it did not allow a larger number of councilors a chance to engage in review and discussion of substantive matters.

The proposed restructuring has been guided by the following goals:

1. Evening out the workload between committees
2. Lessening the committee burden on all councilors
3. Making the work of the Council more efficient
4. Giving greater clarity to where referrals should go
5. Giving more councilors a chance to tackle “meaty” issues
6. Making our jobs as Councilors more “doable” in the long term
7. Giving Councilors a chance to be proactive, not just reactive

After much discussion and debate the Committee makes the following recommendations to the Council:

1. Move Audit to Finance.
2. Break CRC into two separate bodies (CRC and TSO).
3. Move appointments to GOL and dissolve OCA.

MOVING AUDIT TO FINANCE. This seemed the least controversial change. The work of the Audit Committee falls well within the scope of Finance and would free up three Councilors for duties elsewhere.

BREAKING UP CRC. There was a strong feeling that the workload of CRC was not sustainable. Further, given the nature of its current charge, there was a perception that nearly every matter of substance fell under its purview, thereby preventing a majority of councilors from being able to review and discuss matters of real importance. So we have proposed creating two bodies: CRC and TSO. The revamped CRC would have a more long term, big picture perspective. It would concentrate on issues like zoning, land use, housing, economic development, arts and culture, and the Master Plan. The proposed TSO (Town Services and Outreach Committee) would have a narrower focus, attending to the day-to-day provision of town services and the interaction between the Council, the Town and the public we all serve. It would deal broadly with constituent services in areas such as public works, public safety, public ways, senior services, and transportation. But note that its mandate would also include advising the Council on matters that involve broadening public participation in Town affairs, ensuring regular and transparent communication with the public, as well as advising the Council on relations between the Town and its institutions of higher learning.

DISSOLVING OCA AND MOVING APPOINTMENTS TO GOL. While the communication and outreach function of OCA would be largely the task of the newly minted TSO Committee, the appointments function of OCA would be taken over by a reconstituted GOL committee, tentatively renamed GOAL (Governance, Organization, Appointments, and Legislation). GOAL would retain all of the previous functions of the old GOL. It would continue to advise the Council on matters of rules and governance, it would continue to review all bylaws, committee charges, resolutions, proclamations, commemorations, and citations for clarity, consistency, and actionability, and it would propose revisions to the General Bylaws to improve clarity, consistency, and actionability. But now it would also be tasked with making recommendations to the Council on all appointments to the Planning Board, ZBA, non-voting Council

liaisons, and non-voting members of the Finance Committee. It would also review and make recommendations to the Council on all appointments by the Town Manger to head Town departments as well as all Town Manager appointments to multiple member bodies.

SOME HELPFUL DOCUMENTS. Included in the packet, in addition to 6 draft committee charges, are three documents that we feel could be helpful to you in trying to envision how these changes might play out in the real world:

- a series of examples of possible referrals and the relevant Council committee(s) under the proposed restructuring to which they could be referred;
- a list of subject areas (Affordable Housing, Arts & Culture, Public Ways, Senior Services, etc.) linked to the relevant Council committee(s) under the proposed restructuring; and
- a list of current Town committees and Boards linked to the relevant Council Committee(s) under the proposed restructuring.

Our hope is this level of detail will assist you in evaluating the proposal overall. Does it in fact assist the Council in its work? Does it make our jobs more doable? Does it more equitably share out the workload? Does it give us greater clarity as to where things should be referred? Does it give more of us an opportunity to wrestle with important issues and to think more broadly about them? The Committee believes that this proposal does that. We are eager to hear what you think.

Other Items

The Committee is also reviewing the current process for all Public Ways requests which require Town Council action. It is our intention to provide you with a concrete proposal regarding such requests at the next Council meeting.

Committee Members:

Pat DeAngelis
Mandi Jo Hanneke,
Evan Ross, Vice Chair
George Ryan, Chair
Steve Schreiber

Attachments:

None (Referenced proposed revisions to the Town Council Rules of Procedures 10.5(h) and the “GOL Standing Committee Restructuring Proposal” are provided separately)