

6/3/19 Meeting Called to Order 7pm : Pat and Joe excused. Chris assigned to keep minutes.

Motion to approve agenda – Peter, 2nd Anna, unanimous vote

Motion to approve minutes of last meeting – Peter, 2nd Anna, unanimous vote

Public Comment Period:

Comment and discussion with Town Planner, Michelle Gagnon

She commented on role of the planning board in a possible new structure. She remarked that our form of govt. is different than most as a hybrid between TM and Council/Manager and that there are only about 20 towns in Maine that do it this way so she is not as familiar with how things work here. She acknowledged that from what she has gathered there have been some concerns and trust issues in past between various boards, committees, and the council. With regards to LUO, she feels that ordinances should be more dynamic and able to edit quickly and ideally for someone like here and to make the process less cumbersome LUO ordinance changes shouldn't have to go through Town Meeting but could be decided on by the Town Council. She remarked that if a project comes to planning board and even if she is not a fan of it, she is still going to be fair and make sure it has a fair chance with the board and it's not her responsibility to intervene. She then admitted that often once something she didn't agree with has through, she wishes the ordinance could be changed. She sees the importance of a process where there are checks and balances but fears current process is cumbersome and doesn't necessarily lead to better results. Some citizen initiatives don't really work with the whole and can have lots of unintended consequences. Michelle commented that she thinks Council is great at actively listening to constituents. and is great at mobilizing the people but questions if people really know and understand the implications of the things they are voting on. As this town grows it may be at a tipping point where too many people looking at it may not be efficient

There were several questions from Committee for Michelle –

Michael: Sought clarification that she would prefer to see the power over the LUO invested in the Council and not Town Meeting as it would make it easier to make the correct changes and this was answered in the affirmative.

Jill: Would we need a planning board then? Michelle... Must have something but it doesn't have to be the same thing. Many places its more of a review board...

Anna: What about splitting of PB roles review vs project design? Michelle – First function should be review. The rest isn't for her to say.

Peter: What do you mean by dynamic document? Michelle - Process is complex to change and long so it needs to be easier to make changes... should be able to be changed by Council and not a whole town vote. It shouldn't be a 6-month process to change things.

Should PB be elected? Michelle - Given the judicial role of the PB the idea of electing that body doesn't set well with her for just that aspect. Electing the PB may cause too much back and forth between the Council and the PB if they disagree.

END PUBLIC COMMENTS

REGULAR BUSINESS

Considerations of the proposed Budget Com. structure.

Michael: We have tonight to clarify public mtg discussion and next meeting to clarify how meeting will go. Chair would like to do a presentation and outline the timeline and then present the proposed changes. He will submit a draft pres. By 6/17 for us to look and to consider what we like and what the challenges may be.

Jill would like to see this be a unanimous report. If we can't all agree then its going to be harder for public.

Julie. Has a hard time getting on board because she has such a heart for the Warrant Com. As a current member. She loves the volume and size. She hears what everyone is saying about the new proposal but a group of citizens can make a big impact year after year and the warrant engenders community trust (maybe not for everyone) but she has learned a lot from everyone and is still trying to come around.

Anna. This new process may be a deal breaker for her too. Understands its clearly more efficient but she doesn't think it truly address the problem. She doesn't like the slate election but she like the idea of there being lots of involvement and the diversity of personalities. Feels that much of this is all directed at anger at the warrant.

Jill. Hopes people can understand that we aren't eliminating the idea of the warrant comm. It's the idea that we are changing the way it works

Michael: appreciates process of cit. review. Thinks that our new structure creates a great happy medium between efficiency and involvement. This is a good in between.

Anna. Why is it that more people want to be on warrant vs other committees that struggle to get volunteers? Also, commented that she doesn't like the removal of LUO review from the way warrant works now and sees that as the big thing that may hang her up.

Jill. Michelle's comments were thought provoking. If PB is elected they have equal weight as council on these issues and that may not work.

Michael: Suggestion: Keep PB appointed for project review process. Create a LUO review group that is elected to look at LUO or other citizen initiatives and referendums... but that is just an idea. He is also fine with having no need for review of citizen initiatives.

Martha: Concerns about needing unanimous consent of the group as suggested by Jill earlier

Jill: We also need to be careful about Michelle's suggestions For how the Council could take over the LUO process without going to Town Meeting. Its really major and may be too much and not anything anyone asked for.

Chris: likes idea but doing proposed changes and Michelle's but may not have a very good chance of passing as its too much.

Multiple people commented: We may need to set that as another thing to look at for a future commission or for council

Anna: Have we needed this level of review due to a level of distrust by the citizenry? Is there a way to change this that helps create that trust? Creating more trust should be a goal just like improving efficiency and while this structure makes sense for that, splitting up the warrant may not serve to create trust. If she is going to look at a new structure she wants to make sure that it engenders more communication as well.

Michael: We always have the board of appeals as a check on the PB

Chris: Agree with Michael. Doesn't see a problem with election of PB

Martha: What about the School Com? They have some judicial function as well. School Com. is not equal to council.

Jill: Referred to decision about issues with electing boards. The idea that opinion so multiple bodies may not serve the community well.

Michael: Not everyone on Warrant has expertise in every area and it really boils down to sub committee expertise so why not have separate committees that can narrow in on that expertise.

Julie: Who is going to create the structure that makes for less meetings? Will this change really make things more efficient? The charter doesn't address this and so where is the guarantee that there will truly be less meetings?

Mike: We don't want the charter too be too specific with timelines and meeting structures.

Julie: If there is not assurance of efficiency then its all just a big question mark.

Mike: So how do we make this proposed structure acceptable to dissenters in our group and what would that look like?

More discussion on Election or appointment of Planning Board. Question is do we elect or appoint and should we eliminate the idea to have mix of the two?

Peter. Motion: In favor of electing Planning Board.

Discussion:

Anna: If we are changing warrant. Then we need electedness of all bodies. Sees Michelle's point on judicial function but also sees the Zoning Board of Appeals is there to check on that Judicial function.

Martha: Thinks electing PB is weird and not convinced that it works

Jill: Prefer an appointed board and gives council the ability to create a mix of expertise on the board

Julie: Leaning toward appointed for same reasons a Jill.

Chris: In favor of election

Michael: Sees negative to both ways and given that is fine with elected. Given that it keeps it neat and tidy.

Peter: in favor of election. Function of PB as it is now having to do with LUZO and its controversial. He's never been thrilled with the PB serving at the will of the Council. Too many potential problems with that.

Michael: Pat isn't present but has expressed that she doesn't want elected should her vote count. There was general agreement that since Joe isn't present either and cant vote by proxy we should not allow Pats vote in the motion.

Vote: 4-3 the motion passes. Yay. Peter, Anna, Michael, Chris. Nay. Jill, Martha, Julie

Peter: move to reconsider, anna second.

Motion: Marth. Move to that the Planning board is a combination of elected and appointed members. 3 elected, 2 appointed if 5 members or 4 elected 3 appointed if 7 members

Pass: 4-3 yay: peter, julie, martha, anna, nay: chris, michael, jill

Further Discussion:

Should opinions of warrant articles be on the warrant? Some are opposed but some also vote based on those recommendations?

Anna: if these bodies are focused then it cleans up the expertise for putting recommendation.

Michael: with this new structure it needs to pass the process to get on warrant so may not need recommendations.

Jill: Does that create a back and forth that builds back in efficiency?

Julie: People will be pissed if recommendations are taken off the ballot.

Michael: if there are recommendations should all bodies be giving them?

Peter: reconciling budget is a great way to make sure there is or isn't agreement. Discussion followed on how School Comm process works at Town meeting.

Should recommendations be required to be published but taken off the ballot?

Chris: Sees value in the recommendations Leaving the recommendations is an olive branch to those who may not be on board with this whole new structure.

Michael: has heard people on both sides of the issue. Another alternative is not put on ballot but on report.

Anna: Need mechanism for post council review if we put recommendations on ballot

Michael: All we need is to provide wording to allow for that in our descriptions of each committees responsibilities.

Martha: Motion to include recommendations from all three committees and the TC on the ballot

2nd Jill.

Discussion: Does this include Citizen Initiatives If we are not putting rec. on Citizen Initiatives on the ballots should there be a requirement for a public hearing on them so the public can give comment and ask questions?

Much discussion on having a dual review on these initiatives. Will that need a new motion.

Motion carries 6-1 Peter nay. All others yay.

Decision to table of discussion at a later date of how to handle recommendations on Citizen Initiatives.

Michael: Is it okay if we take art 7 and re name it and move school comm to that the renamed article? Would need to come up with a new name for Article VII based on if we are elected or appointed. General agreement that this is fine.

9:15pm: Motion to Adjourn till 6/17. Unanimous.

Respectfully Submitted.

Chris Strout.