

Government Study Committee Minutes January 14, 2020

Present: Gary Champion; Tammy Jones; Craig Saline, chair; Diane Young.

Guests: Bill Fabri, Chris Murray.

Call to order: 7:01pm by Saline.

Citizens queries: None.

Minutes: December 10, 2019 minutes were approved.

Housekeeping:

Saline noted that the GSC charge will go to the Town Manager's assistant in the next couple of weeks to go up on the Committee's page on the Town website.

Committee members were reminded to attend to Leah Niska's email about conflict of interest law and ethics training. Members Champion and Young are up for reappointment this spring.

The Waterways Advisory Committee meets on January 15, with the waterways bylaw as agenda item 9. Saline will attend.

Old business:

Waterways Bylaw: Chris Murray, chair of the Waterways Advisory Committee, reported that he has not been able to meet with Town Counsel yet. At WAC's January 15 meeting, he will present a version of the bylaw, with changes that reflect WAC's discussions thus far.

The deadline to submit articles for the warrant is January 21.

Saline requested that WAC add language about how the composition of the existing board will carry over, e.g., "Current WAC members continue through the end of their term." This may be an item to ask Town Counsel about, as well as how to handle existing bylaws (two sets) down the road. Town Counsel will opine on regulatory approval. Saline expects a member of WAC to attend the Select Board meeting with GSC to present the article, as well as meetings with the Planning Board, School Committee, and FinComm. Editing continues during the review process with these bodies.

Jones commented that Murray's version of the bylaw lays out the points very cleanly, codifies balance of power, and makes it parallel to other committees.

Saline noted that the charge to WAC, as included in the bylaw, is not the purview of GSC.

Murray will send his document to the Harbormaster and Town Counsel tomorrow and advise them of the need for a timely response. Any contradictory opinion from those two individuals will have to be considered.

Murray and Fabri left the meeting at 7:27pm.

Champion commented that no other town or city has its Harbormaster approving regulations.

Saline reviewed comments from Town Counsel. In 2014, Town Counsel said that the Harbormaster creates and approves regulations. Two years later, Town Counsel said that if Town Meeting wants to decide who the regulatory authority is, it may. Town Counsel's opinion has evolved WAC wants to confirm that with Town Counsel.

Young noted that Murray's draft rewrite of the bylaw says the Harbormaster shall propose changed in coordination with WAC. Saline responded that the key is that changes are approved by the Select Board, so that language is okay.

Changes in timeline for Town Meeting warrant: In October 2019, Town Meeting voted to establish an ad hoc committee to review and make recommendation to the Annual Town Meeting 2020 concerning how long the warrant stays open, etc. Saline suggested that GSC invite Jim Engle to talk about it. GSC is not directly involved in this review. Members of GSC may wish to attend the ad hoc committee's meetings as individuals. GSC may present an opinion at Town Meeting.

There was a discussion about the order and timing of override votes at Town Meeting and at the ballot box. Also discussed was the crunch in the four-week period between the opening of the warrant and the printing of the warrant booklet by FinComm.

Follow-up to Town Meeting votes: Champion reported that Senate Bill S2406 passed, adding gender neutral language to the charter.

Next meeting date: Tuesday, February 11, 2020.

Adjournment: 8:12pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane J. Young, Secretary