

Town Council Study Committee February 7, 2024

1. The bi-weekly meeting of the Town Council Study Committee was held in Meeting Trailer "B" on Wednesday, February 7, from 3:00 p.m. to 5 p.m. Attendance was in person and available on Zoom.
2. Attending in person were Joe Grause, Chair; Beau Barber, Kelly Steffen, Rachel Mandle, Jeff Carlson, Caroline Baltzer. Guest Libby Gibson. Attending via Zoom - Donna Martino, Jill Veith, Jeremy Bloomer and Tom Dixon. Guests Town Counsel John Giorgio, and members from the Collins Center: Anthony Wilson, Patricia Lloyd and Mel Kleckner.
3. The agenda was approved as submitted. The minutes were approved with one clarification on page 2 comment attributed to Rachel Mandle about only 2% paying attention was actually by Mr. Dutton.
4. Presentation by Libby Gibson and John Giorgio regarding the Town Charter was held. Comments and points of clarification included:
 - County Commissioners also have additional duties outlined in the County Charter as Nantucket is a Town and County.
 - Charter allows delegation of some appointments to the Town Manager and while not specified, the appointment process followed is the same as outlined in the Charter.
 - Town Government Study Committee HRP from 2022 and 2023 still pending legislative approval. They are to meet every 5 years and this Committee is considered to count for that.
 - Joe asked current Town size. Approximately 600 FT (includes school but not seasonal) and about a dozen department heads report to TM or Assistant TM. Those outside TM oversight have a lot of collaboration with Town Administration.
 - Caroline asked for clarification on delegation of authority. Mr. Giorgio explained that the GL delegates authority but a Charter can be different than GL. For example, elected vs. appointed Town Clerk.
 - Donna asked what's the best way to enact a change. Mr. Giorgio reviewed the various processes for revision a Charter and highly recommended Special Act Charter change which is available when a major revision of Charter is recommended at an OTM via a HRP with draft of a new charter for voting. If approved, a general legislature review is conducted. It is suggested to include a provision that once approved at the legislature level it is to be placed on the next election ballot for approval as this likely will be a required provision by the legislature anyways.
 - Rachel asked what do you usually see as an event or reason to change current form? Mr. Giorgio reiterated needing a good compelling reason and have seen many.
 - Public Comment:
 - o Cambell Sutton: can you compel representatives to attend under a representative form of government. Mr. Giorgio indicates no but can include conditions to continue to serve such at attendance and consequences for not serving but must be written.
 - o Hillary Rayport: if moved to a representative would the Charter address precinct definition or area determination? Short answer is yes, guided by Charter.
 - o Bob Dobies – is there a cost to move to council vs. current form? Giorgio Consider compensation of council. Usually with a large budget that additional amount is insignificant.

Kelly left and joined via Zoom.

5. Presentation by Anthony Wilson et al – Organization Structure Overview was held. Comments and points of clarification included:
 - Have done various recent studies and recommendation and only 1 on the list put

something forward to voters (Plymouth).

- Reiterated Charter is subordinate to GLs except flexibility in organization structure and bylaws are subordinate to Charter.
- Committee appears to be following Special Act Charter path by creation of this committee and the charge. It is very important to have input from the public, boards, staff and SB on change and draft Charter. Echoes importance of including language to send to election in the process when submitted to legislature for review and approval.
- Recommend a yes or no response from legislature or feedback on adjustments. As legislature may reject some provisions it gives permission of legislature to make changes. Usually they communicate such changes to council or Town Manager with reason why but there's always a concern the intent of the provision will get watered down. They may turn down the change if only passed by small margin.
- Public input on the work plan is important and will be asked what the public input process was. Joe asked what other communities have done for this? Surveys, public hearings, committee members hold talking sessions at local centers, fair/public event, etc. to answer questions, social media and letters to the editor.
- The 4 basic forms that are available are based on population per State Constitution. While most of the 351 municipalities are OTM, the bulk of the population is in City/Mayor and town council.
- Public Comment Jeremy Bloomer inquired about what the problem the other Towns they worked with were trying to address and do you have analysis if the change addressed the problem. Those who go to TC from OTM mostly saw residents felt need to move faster to address issues. Have not identified any that returned to prior form after a change. Usually see study or look into changing also when see lack of engagement, small % participate in OTM or at meetings, hard time filling boards, positions, committee openings and or only the same small pool who apply.
- How do we map over numerous Boards and Committees we have now? We have some unique features such as we are our own County and various Special Acts. Provide for a Transition provision for time for the current board structure to move to new structure. Charters are to be more high level and not specific – leave the details and specifics to bylaws.
- Public Comment:
 - o Bob Dobies inquired on size and meeting frequency. Usually 9-11 and meet as often as SB does. Public concern is those on council have the time and skills to perform role.
 - o Hillary Rayport suggested vote to look at all forms. Group will seek clarification on warrant article and charge. Feel will naturally look at other forms without needing a formal vote to do so. Hillary also inquired if there's been any research on how to get OTM to work better. Collins is not focused on research, more on the ground. Some Towns try changing day, time, spread it out or more than one a year.
 - o Lucy Hehir why was this brought up? Joe explained article by Curtis at ATM, Caroline noted lack efficiency, grant acceptance, and ability ATM to represent all voters as small portion comes.
 - o Campbell Sutton inquired what happens to the other committees if move to Council? Anthony stated this varies, councils often have subcommittees that you can map some existing into the new form. The most important is the designation of appointing authority.
 - o Mary Wawro noted that she has updated the Civic League about the Committee and will be extending an offer to assist in public outreach and set up a meeting in the future.

6. Next agenda item should include discussion of public polling and getting information out to the public.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:13 p.m.

Rachel Mandle