

Town Council Committee Study

Meeting Minutes June 12, 2024

In Attendance: Beau Barber, Caroline Baltzer, Curtis Barnes, Jeff Carlson, Joe Grause, Kelly Steffen and Rachel Mandle. Tom Dixon, Jill Vieth, Donna Martino as ex-officio members.

After a *Call to Order*, the Committee approved the minutes from two prior meetings. The group then discussed potential Open Meeting Law trainings members could attend and then conducted a round table where each member shared their thoughts on what the next steps for the Committee should be.

Curtis Barnes went first, offering structural advice and preferences for a Town Council, including the number of council members, potential pay, and reporting structures. Mr. Barnes would like current Select Board members to roll over to a Town Council and thought existing commissions and committees should continue to advise a proposed Town Council.

Kelly Steffen went next. While he is open to continuing to research and author a charter for Town Council, he is deeply concerned that without the proper foresight, a Town Council would lack the same representation and inclusion Nantucket's Town Meeting currently does.

Beau Barber then went. His concern is that Town Meeting has already become a pseudo-Representative Town Meeting and that Town Council would provide the correct checks and balances appropriate to the needs of our growing community and municipal budget.

Jeff Carleson agrees with Curtis and Beau's sentiments and thinks the following steps need to examine and debate the pros and cons of different structural variables of a potential Town Council. Mr Carleson also emphasized that he thinks any outstanding questions will be answered in this process.

Caroline Baltzer emphasized the article's original task and its explicit focus on the Town Council. Ms. Baltzer thinks the clear next steps are to author a Town Council charter and put it in front of the voters. She, too, thinks unanswered questions will get sorted out in the process. She also expressed the need for it to be tailored to the needs of Nantucket and its community.

Tom Dixon refrained from sharing his perspective and said if the committee wishes to pursue a focus on Town Council and a proposed article/charter, he will stay involved as a liaison to the various town bodies.

Jill Vieth discussed how citizen articles often are not handled appropriately or adequately researched from a legal and governance perspective, which in turn causes inefficiency and voter disengagement. Ms. Veith also thinks expediency and an ability to be more responsive as a municipality will be better in a Town Council government.

Rachel Mandle wants to make sure we list out the challenges of what we have now and what other forms of government would look like. Ms. Mandle then emphasized starting to

explore concrete components of what a Town Council charter would look like, as she thinks that this step makes conversations more manageable.

Donna Martino, representing non-voter taxpayers, says their group has already endorsed Town Council and thinks access for non-voting taxpayers to shape legislation will increase.

Joe Grauss went last and echoed many of the previous sentiments, especially the need for more responsive and tactile municipal bodies. He reemphasized that the committee was explicitly tasked with focusing on Town Council and thinks that any questions about a Town Council or other forms of government will be answered as this process continues. Lastly, he expressed the need to start thinking about how the committee will engage the community and advocate the proposed switch to Town Council.

The June 12 meeting was then finished with discussions about the article and charter timeline, potential summer meeting schedules, community outreach, further research, and how the Collins Center can assist in this process.