

Town Council Study Committee Meeting Minutes Date: August 7, 2024

Location: Hybrid (In-person and via Zoom)

Chair: Joe Grause

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chair Joe Grause.

II. Hybrid Meeting Guidelines

- Meeting was conducted under Hybrid Meeting Guidelines with members participating in person and via Zoom

III. Attendance Confirmation

Members present:

- Caroline Baltzer
- Curtis Barnes
- Jeff Carlson
- Beau Barber
- Joe Grause
- Jill Vieth
- Tom Dixon
- Donna Martino

Staff members present: Anthony Wilson and Patricia Lloyd from the Colin Center.

IV. Opening Remarks

Chair Joe Grause explained that the meeting is being conducted under Massachusetts public meeting laws, allowing public comment and participation.

V. Agenda Review

- The agenda was accepted unanimously after a motion by Curtis Barnes and a second by Caroline Baltzer.

VI. Invitation to Mr. Lewis Crampton

Joe welcomed Mr. Lewis Crampton, Vice Chair of the Palm Beach Town Council, to discuss how the Palm Beach Town Council operates. Mr. Crampton spoke for approximately 15 minutes about the following points:

- **Palm Beach Overview:** Mentioned the permanent population (10,000) and seasonal expansion (35,000).

- **Council Structure:** Described a “weak” mayor system where the mayor does not vote on council issues and serves a ceremonial role.
- **Town Manager:** Discussed the role of a strong Town Manager who oversees town operations with council approval.
- **District Representation:** Town divided into five districts; elections held at-large every two years.
- **Budget Overview:** Town operates with a budget exceeding \$100 million, emphasizing the importance of managing personnel costs and maintaining fiscal health.
- **Recent Issues:** Challenges regarding zoning reforms and development pressures as wealthier residents seek large properties.

VII. Questions for Mr. Crampton

Questions were raised about:

- Finance Committee's role in budget preparation and oversight.
- Civic and residents' associations being well-coordinated.

Mr. Crampton emphasized the importance of engagement with the community to address concerns.

VIII. Review of Meeting Minutes

The minutes from the previous meeting, held on July 24, 2024, were not approved as no members had reviewed them. A motion was made for the clerk to summarize the video recording for future minutes.

IX. Collins Center Discussion

- Joe turned the discussion back to Anthony and Pat from the Collins Center to continue discussing Article 3 regarding the Town Council's legislative branch.

X. Review of Previous Meeting Topics

- Anthony and Pat briefly recapped discussions from the last meeting, including:
 - Planning and Economic Development Commission appointments.
 - Changes in governmental structure.
 - The role of non-resident taxpayers and their representation.

XI. Legislative Changes Discussion

- Pat shared a document detailing proposed changes to the charter. Key points discussed include:
 - Residents being able to speak freely at Town Council meetings, building on existing rights.
 - Mention of forming advisory committees for underrepresented groups within the community for better inclusion in policymaking.

XII. Specific Sections Reviewed

- Section 2.2: Discussion about the former members of the Town Council holding other compensated positions. There was an agreement to consider a waiver option for the one-year restriction to allow for flexibility.
- Section 2.3: The process for selecting a council president and vice president on a yearly basis was confirmed to allow for continuity while still being flexible.

XIII. Council President's Role with School Committee

- The committee discussed whether the council president should also serve on the school committee.
 - Various perspectives were shared:
 - Some members favored having a liaison for better coordination.
 - Others cautioned against potential governance issues
 - Chair Grause offered to contact Pauline Proch, Chair of the School Committee, for her reaction and comment. Mr. Grause will report back to the Committee at a future meeting
- Members shared their views on the importance of school representation and interaction with the Town Council:

XVIII. Miscellaneous Topics

- Questions arose about how vacancies on the Town Council would be handled:
 - Discussion about whether to appoint someone or wait for an election addressed concerns about maintaining proper representation.

Minutes Prepared by: Beau Barber

XIX. Adjournment

The meeting concluded with a unanimous vote to adjourn, motioned by Caroline, seconded by Curtis.