



TOWN OF WILMINGTON

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Minutes

Bylaw Review Committee

Wednesday, June 16, 2021 - 6:30 p.m.

Wilmington Town Hall

121 Glen Road, Wilmington, MA - Auditorium

1. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. Present were committee members Gary DePalma, John Romano, Frank Olivieri, Daniel Ardito, Michael McCoy, Christine Touma-Conway.

2. Elect Committee Chair

Mr. DePalma stated that he had been in touch with committee member Robert Peterson, Jr., who told him that he would be willing to accept a nomination as Chair. Mr. DePalma nominated Robert Peterson, Jr. as Chair of the Bylaw Review Committee, seconded by Mr. Romano. The committee voted unanimously to appoint Mr. Peterson as Chair.

3. Review and approve minutes of July 15, 2020 meeting.

The draft minutes from the July 15, 2020 meeting were presented and reviewed. Mr. Olivieri stated that he didn't believe the Committee should re-visit any recommendations that were voted down. Mr. Romano stated that he believed the Committee needed a better plan to coordinate with the Board of Selectmen, who ultimately would be presented with the Committee's recommendations. Mr. DePalma suggested inviting the chair of the Board of Selectmen to a working meeting of the Committee to give a sense of the kind of work that the Committee is performing. Ms. Touma-Conway expressed her sense that having a Committee chair that was a member of the community might be helpful when the time comes to advocate for the Committee's recommendations to the Board of Selectmen and Town Meeting.

Upon motion by Mr. DePalma, seconded by Mr. Olivieri, the minutes were approved unanimously. Mr. Romano abstained from voting because he was not present at the July 15, 2020 meeting.

4. Discuss request of Board of Selectmen for opinion on changing its name to “Select Board”

Mr. McCoy asked how the Board of Selectmen felt about this potential change. Mr. DePalma, as a member of that Board, stated they felt positively towards the change. Mr. McCoy said that ultimately, the voters of the town could weigh in at Town Meeting. Mr. Romano asked if there were any other options for re-naming. Mr. DePalma stated there were not, and that other towns have been making the change, which made these Selectmen believe they should also.

Mr. DePalma went on to state that members of the Select Board would be Selectmen or Selectwomen. He said that this is a minute issue that would result in a positive change. The issue was raised of possibly raising this question at a Special Town Meeting in the fall if one were to be called, to give the Town time to submit a Home Rule Petition to the State Legislature, which, if passed in time, could then be considered in the Spring at the Annual Town Election.

Mr. Romano made a motion to seek to have this matter placed on a Special Town Meeting warrant, if such a meeting were called in the Fall, so that a home rule petition could be potentially passed by the state legislature in time to be considered in the spring, seconded by Mr. DePalma. As a point of reference, Mr. Olivieri inquired as to whether the Board of Selectmen had endorsed this change, and Mr. DePalma stated they had, but that the matter must still go to Town Meeting. The motion was passed unanimously.

5. Discuss and decide upon methodology for completing Editorial and Legal Analysis submitted by General Code, including setting a schedule to ensure completion by due date of September 10, 2021

Mr. Romano said he is concerned that the Committee would do all the work involved and then, when presented to the Board of Selectmen, the Committee’s recommendations would be met with resistance, as happened with the Committee’s prior recommendations. He said it would be important due to the volume of changes that are to be recommended that all parties move quickly over the “small” stuff and move to the more substantive changes being discussed.

Mr. DePalma recommended a potential joint meeting with the Board of Selectmen to explain the process, the goals, and get its “buy in” on the changes. If they know the plan early in the process, and are given the opportunity for input, he believes it will result in more acceptance of Committee recommendations.

Mr. McCoy suggested that the Committee send a letter to the Board of Selectmen inviting them to a Committee meeting so the two bodies could have a joint discussion about methodology. Mr. Romano added that this would help to let them know the volume of what will be forthcoming once the Committee finishes its work. Mr. DePalma agreed a joint meeting would help to keep everyone on the same page.

Mr. Ardito suggested that prior to the next meeting, the Committee review the proposed changes and indicate on a checksheet that he would create and send out the responses to questions they are sure of, and that at the next meeting the committee members could compare their answers and any questions the Committee was in agreement on the response to could be set aside and not have to be discussed.

It was agreed that Ms. Touma-Conway would get in touch with Mr. Peterson, advise him of the desire to invite the Board of Selectmen to the next Committee meeting, to prepare and send the invitation to them. Also, that Mr. Ardito would prepare the spreadsheet listing all the questions and possible responses contained in the General Code Editorial and Legal Analysis and send it to Ms. Touma-Conway, who would then send both a hard copy of the spreadsheet and analysis to the Committee members.

6. Schedule next meeting

The Committee decided to schedule its next meeting for Tuesday, June 29, 2021 at 4:30 p.m. Whether the Board of Selectmen would be invited to that meeting or one in July was left to be determined by the facts as they unfold in the next week.

7. Adjourn

Mr. McCoy made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. DePalma.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

**Christine R. Touma-Conway
Town Clerk**