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TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE

MINUTES

Ordinance Committee Special Meeting

Monday, November 30th, 2020- 7:00pm

Zoom Teleconference (646)558-8656 – ID #859 4233 7668

Members Present: Annmarie Drugonis, Bob Findley and Rob VanEgghen

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Town Counsel Bryan LeClerc, Chief of Staff Rory Burke

1. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order at 7 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

All present stood and recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Public Comment

There was no public comment.

4. Approve minutes from Ordinance Committee Special Meeting; November 16, 2020

A motion was made to approve the minutes as presented.

Motion: Bob Findley

Second: Rob VanEgghen

Vote: 3-0

5. Economic Development Commission

Bryan: If you like, I can go through the changes to the ordinances that will be on the agenda for the Board of Selectmen tomorrow. For the volunteer firefighter abatement, we made some small grammatical changes and increased the amount to \$1,500. We added a new category, defining volunteers as someone who's a resident of Seymour who volunteers their time as an active member in good standing with one of the Fire Companies. We added another definition for retired volunteers as someone who is over the age of 65, has completed at least 25 years of service in the Seymour Fire Department, and active as defined by the Fire Commissioners or Ambulance Association. Beginning July 1, 2021 it's \$1,500. The First Selectman will forward the list to the Tax Collector by March 1st and it will be applied first to real estate taxes in Seymour in the volunteer's name, then to motor vehicle taxes in Seymour in their name, lastly to any other real estate in Seymour in their name. Any amount not used in a given year cannot be taken as a credit. Volunteers must be current on their taxes to be eligible.

Commission on the aging is listed as a committee so that was changed to be consistent with the Charter. We made the duties consistent with the Charter. For the Board of Ethics, we matched it with the Charter to have 2 Democrats, 2 Republican and one unaffiliated member. Safety Commission was deleted. Welfare Advisory Board was deleted. Beautification Commission was deleted. Employee Safety Commission was changed to a committee and made the ordinance match the OSHA regulations. Arts & Culture was change from 7 members to 5 and removed references related to the Strand Theater. Municipal Aquifer Protection Agency changed references from DEP to DEEP. We eliminated the Friends of the Broad Street Park Commission.

Annmarie: I think we're ready to put this forward to the Selectmen tomorrow.

Bryan: You may want to have the Finance Director prepare the impact in case the Selectmen ask. Regarding Economic Development, there is a State Statute, 7-136. It allows Towns to establish Economic Development Commissions for the promotion and development of economic resources of the Town. It has to specify the number of members, which can be between 5 and 15 members. You can have appointed or elected alternates. You have to set the terms, which cannot exceed 5 years and they must be staggered. Vacancies can be filled by the First Selectmen. They must prepare an annual report for the Board of Selectmen. It's empowered to conduct research into conditions and trends, make recommendations on how to improve the economic condition and development, seek to coordinate activities with unofficial bodies for how to improve economic development, advertise and distribute charts, maps and pamphlets and it can have a budget of no more than 1/20th of 1% of the Grand List. Your Commission goes a lot further. Your Charter has it at 5 members, operational directives, research and recommendations to officials regarding improving economic condition, development and activities, and recommendations to P&Z regarding changes to the master plan of economic development and regulations.

Bob: I recommend a major overhaul.

Annmarie: I agree.

Bob: I think at minimum we should address the terms to reflect the Charter and stagger the terms. I think the reports are important but we need to work on it. I think we need to scale back their role.

Bryan: I'm not sure we can legally require some of the things in the current ordinance.

Annmarie: So we want the Commission to put directives together for the Director?

Bob: I don't think so.

Rob: I think the idea was for residents to be able to guide the process and give them a say.

Bob: I think we need to make the decision about whether we want to have a Director, period. They don't have any jurisdiction over the budget, though, or shouldn't.

Rob: I think the Commission and the Director can work together.

Bob: I have a fundamental problem with whether the Commission has any control over the budget, because that can be quite large.

Annmarie: I would think the Director would report the First Selectman.

Bryan: Correct, the ordinance is in conflict with the statute. They would report to the First Selectperson.

Annmarie: I think we all agree we need the Commission.

Rob: Correct, I don't think the Director should report to the Commission but they should communicate and work together. I think part of the problem before was that they thought that should be the case.

Bob: The Director can facilitate communication between the Commission and the Board of Selectmen.

Annmarie: There were communications concerns according to Kurt.

Bob: They also never really communicated with Planning and Zoning or the other boards but they're supposed to. This all goes back to what we're doing with the Director, because this was written with that in mind.

Rob: I think we need the Commission for the residents to interface with, not to interact with the businesses.

Bob: In lieu of a Director, the First Selectman should be in charge of economic development. I would hope a Director would create a strategy and bounce it off the Commission as a sounding board.

Annmarie: Exactly, the Director reports to the elected position. What can we do about the Charter?

Bryan: We can set a Charter revision commission. Or, you can take the position in the ordinance that it's beyond the scope of 7-136 that you set the policy directives, the Commission sets the operational

directive, how to carry out the policy. That's why the First Selectman appoints the EDC, to determine how to carry out policy. I think we can write this to align the ordinance with the Charter as well as 7-136 in the Charter. I would remove the policy directive line from the ordinance and you can change the Charter during the next revision.

Annmarie: I don't think a staff member should report to a volunteer board.

Rob: Agreed, I think it should have been collaboration all along. I think the mentality of a superior/subordinate is where things went off track.

Bob: For the Director, should we be giving the job description to the HR Director to post?

Rory: We can do it however the Board pleases. The Selectmen may want to update the description to make sure the duties and responsibilities match your vision of the position. I will make sure it goes out with the updated ordinances for the Selectmen meeting tomorrow.

Bryan: I'll have a rewrite for your next meeting.

6. Strategic Planning Commission

Bob: I read this and they're following it to the letter.

Annmarie: I don't see anything to change. We can move on.

7. Municipal Erosion Control

Annmarie: Isn't this part of the Board of Selectmen?

Rory: Correct, I believe the ordinance designates them to fill the role. I believe this is one of the statutory ones. Bryan, does it deviate from the statute?

Bryan: I'm reviewing it now to see how it differs. This is related to dams and other similar structures and the infrastructure related thereto. You can assess properties that benefit from these upgrades to pay for them. I will get back to you for your next meeting.

Annmarie: What do we want to look at next?

Rob: Should we do Chapter II, Article III? Next meeting on the 14th?

8. Discussion and take possible action on other ordinances forwarded by the Board of Selectman

There was no further discussion.

A motion was made to adjourn the meeting was adjourned at 8: PM.

Motion: Bob Flndley

Second: Rob VanEggen

Vote: 3-0

Submitted by,



Rory Burke

Recording Secretary

