

Call to Order

Committee Chair Mr. Stumpf called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the Third Floor Conference Room. The meeting was live cablecast.

Participants

Present were: Town Clerk & Chief Strategy Officer Austin Simko (ex-officio); Sheila Doherty (ex-officio); TGSC Committee members Sandy Stapczynski, Gail Ralston, Richard Fox, David Floreen, Paula Colby-Clements, Paul Cavicchi, Andrew McBrien, Dara Obbard, and Jon Stumpf; and Bernie Lynch of Community Paradigm Associates. There were no remote participants.

Opening Comments

Mr. Stumpf thanked Danny of Andover TV for attending the meeting to televise it.

1. Approval of Minutes of Meeting of 10/7/19

The date of the next meeting was recorded in the minutes of the previous meeting as 10/7/19. Mr. McBrien will correct this to read 10/22/19. Ms. Doherty moved that the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as amended, Ms. Ralston seconded. The committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes as amended.

2. Sub-Committee Reports and Discussion

Both the Sub-Committee for Community Engagement and Town Boards and the Sub-Committee for Town Boards and Committees Outreach reported to the committee and their input was discussed.

2.1 Sub-Committee for Community Engagement

The Sub-Committee for Community Engagement met in the period between the previous meeting of the full committee and this meeting, and developed an overall structure for this process. Mr. Simko, Ms. Ralston and Ms. Stapczynski described this to the committee and also explained the rationale behind their proposal.

- Three forums shall be held to gather public input. These shall be referred to as “Listening Sessions”. Each shall be chaired/facilitated by a member of the TGSC. Mr. Stumpf, as TGSC Chair, would be the preferred leader for each, subject to availability.
- These forums shall be intended strictly to listen to public input. The TGSC shall not present or discuss options, nor offer opinions at any of these forums. Furthermore, the “rubric” of the forums shall make clear that discussion of specific decisions or issues and of specific individuals is out of scope. Ms. Colby-Clements cautioned that questions should be worded carefully to ensure they do not invite conversation on non-governance issues.
- The forums shall be held in November, possibly spilling over into December if scheduling forces this
- The times and locations of the forums shall be mixed. Forums shall be held in at least two different weeks to accommodate townspeople who might be travelling, during the week and on a weekend, and at different times of the day. This calls for a minimum of three forums.

- The sub-committee proposed Wednesday November 11th, Saturday November 16th and Wednesday November 20th for the forums, and locations to be selected from Memorial Hall Library, the Public Safety Center and the Youth Center.

In follow-up discussion, Ms. Obbard noted that most parents have more flexibility during the day. Mr. Lynch reminded the committee that many seniors are uncomfortable with events after dark. Thus, one of the meetings should be held at 9.00am (immediately after school runs). It was suggested that the Saturday meeting should be held in the Old Town Hall to align with the morning coffee event, and the committee agreed to adopt this. The Public Works Center and Technical High School were suggested for consideration as alternative venues, the former to give members of the public an opportunity to see the new facility, the latter to provide a venue that is not downtown. However, it was agreed that the Memorial Hall Library and the Public Safety Center, plus the Old Town Hall, was an optimal mix of venues and these alternatives would not be required.

In conclusion, the times and locations were fixed (subject to availability) as follows:

- Saturday November 16th - Old Town Hall, 9.30 – 11.00am
- Wednesday November 20th - Public Safety Center, 7.00 – 8.0 pm
- Wednesday December 11th - Memorial Hall Library, 9.00 – 10.30am

Mr. Simko was authorized to book the spaces as above.

The sub-committee will continue to work on these meetings, specifically to develop a substantive program, including introductory materials and discussion topics, and to develop publicity materials, including content for the Townsman and for distribution via Twitter and the Town Web site. These materials should also be used to publicize that the study as a whole is under way, and to publicize alternative ways by which the community may submit input. Mr. Cavicchi and Mr. McBrien will join the sub-committee. The sub-committee will report back the full committee on November 6th for approval of the substantive program.

2.2 Sub-Committee for Town Boards and Committees Outreach

The Sub-Committee for Town Boards and Committees Outreach met in the period between the previous meeting of the full committee and this meeting. The sub-committee tabled a detailed document that described their conclusions and talked through this. This document is appended and provides sufficient record of their presentation.

In discussion, the following points were raised.

- Mr. Lynch recommended that the committee be very clear to interview subjects that this is a preliminary information-gathering exercise, and that the interviewees need only provide commensurate detail.
- In addition to interviewing Select Board members, the TGSC should also interview the Town Manager and Superintendent of Schools.
- The questions should be provided to a Board or Committee a minimum of 3 working days before the interview with that body to provide sufficient time for the members of that body to collaborate to prepare their response. This principle was agreed unanimously.
- Mr. Floreen asked whether the TGSC should allow anonymous written responses, noting that the TGSC might receive more candid responses if this were allowed, but that transparency requires that names be provided. This question was not resolved.
- There should be no more than 15 questions in the initial set sent to each Board or Committee. The Sub-Committee for Town Boards and Committees Outreach agreed to consolidate the questions in their proposal to reach this number. That said, rejected

questions may be useful as follow-ups to clarify the main questions, and should not be disposed of entirely.

The sub-committee will reconvene to streamline the questions, then report back to the full committee at the meeting on November 6th

3. Input From Diverse Spectrum of Community

Mr. McBrien explained why he had requested that ethnic communities be added to the list of specific sections of society from whom input is to be solicited. The 2018 Andover School Report shows that English is not the first language of 14.6% of Andover students. It would be incorrect to extrapolate that 14.6% of voters also have a first language other than English. It is reasonable to assume that English is a challenge to some proportion of voters, and it is reasonable to assume that such people might feel uncomfortable giving their input in open public forums. Rather, specific approaches are required to reach this population segments, for example, reaching out to the leaders of ethnic communities.

Mr. Fox expressed concern that there is a risk that by listing specific segments for outreach, the committee will overlook people who do not belong to these segments. Ms. Doherty also expressed concern that listing segments might imply that the committee considers these to be the more important.

Ms. Obbard argued that fundamentally, any list of segments should be taken as a reminder to the committee that we must reach out to everyone equally irrespective of their ability, language or other demographic distinction; that there are specific segments for whom tailored outreach approaches are required; and that the committee must identify segments for whom specific approaches are required to inform us where such techniques should be developed.

The TGSC agreed unanimously that this should be part of the work of the Sub-Committee for Community Engagement, rather than be a matter for the committee as a whole. The members of the sub-Committee accepted this.

Mr. Fox suggested that the unions representing Town employees should be included. Mrs. Stapczynski pointed out that even if employees or department heads live outside Andover, they are providing a service to the Town, and as such, their input should be solicited. She further suggested that CPA might attend meetings of Town departments to pursue this. Mr. Lynch informed the committee that the Town Manager is already working on this.

Ms. Doherty appealed that the committee should place all deliberations in the context of the Town Bylaws and MGL, and the government structure and constraints that these put in place. Firstly, the Bylaws and MGL put bounds on options that are open for consideration. Secondly, a systematic consideration of the Bylaws will make explicit assumptions that might be questioned. Most importantly, it is only by understanding the current Bylaws that the committee will see areas for potential top-level changes to governance. Mr. Stumpf stated that he would like the committee to spend the majority of the meeting on November 6th discussing we should investigate the top-level structure of Andover's governance, and asked that members start to familiarize themselves with the relevant sections of the Bylaws.

4. Next Steps

Mr. Stumpf summarized next steps as follows:

- Listening Sessions will be conducted on Wednesday November 11th (Memorial Hall Library, 9.00 – 10.30am), Saturday November 16th (Old Town Hall, 9.30 – 11.00am) and Wednesday November 20th (Public Safety Center, 7.00 – 8.0 pm)
- The Sub-Committee for Community Engagement will develop a substantive program for these sessions and report back the full committee on November 6th.
- The Sub-Committee for Town Boards and Committees Outreach will reconvene to streamline the questions and report back to the full committee on November 6th
- The Sub-Committee for Community Engagement will identify segments of the community for whom specific approaches will be required to capture input, and develop such approaches.
- The committee will spend the majority of the meeting on November 6th discussing how we should investigate the top-level structure of Andover's governance.
- Members should start to familiarize themselves with the relevant sections of the Bylaws.

Audience Participation

There were no audience members.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on November 6, 2019 at 7.00pm.

Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 6:35 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Andrew McBrien, Clerk

Attachments:

Subcommittees Proposal for Engagement of Town Boards and Committees