

Approved
Town of Ridgefield Form of Government Committee
Meeting Minutes for Monday, January 6, 2025
Town Hall Large Conference Room – 400 Main Street

RECEIVED
12:43 PM
MAR 05 2025
BY TOWN CLERK'S OFFICE
RIDGEFIELD CT
draft rec'd 11/125

1. Call to order

The Form of Government Committee meeting convened at 7:00 PM on Monday, January 6, 2025 in the Town Hall Main Conference Room.

Members present: Laurie Christiansen, Michael Rettger, Charles Robbins, Jonathan Seem, Robert Hendrick, Todd Zagorec

Members absent: Rachel Sondheimer, Steve Zemo, Dennis Tracey

Others Participating: None

2. Public Comments

Andrea Beebe, Main Street, offered comments and suggestions for the Committee's consideration regarding recommended changes to the procedures for the Town Meeting.

Mr. Zagorec read for the record an email communication received from Debra Franceschini-Gatje, Spire View Road, with comments and suggestions for the Committee's consideration on various points related to the Committee's charter.

3. Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve the minutes of the December 16, 2024 meeting by Mr. Zagorec , seconded by Mr. Hendrick . All in favor

4. Communications

Members reported on several recent presentations to community groups regarding the Committee's purpose and activities.

Mr. Zagorec reported on his work to organize the Committee's Drop Box repository.

Mr. Zagorec reviewed several recent emails received by the Committee. Members discussed alternatives for reviewing such communications and incorporating relevant suggestions into the Committee's work. *Mr. Seem will develop a spreadsheet to log the receipt of all communications received, including a short summary of content. Ms. Christiansen will work with Mr. Seem to forward these communications to be logged. Ms. Christiansen or Mr. Zagorec will forward all such communications to the full membership for their review.*

The members discussed how to approach review and consideration of comments submitted in such communications. It was agreed that all substantive suggestions should receive consideration by the Committee, but it was also noted that based on the examples seen to date, not all the content of each communication merits action, as some content is general suggestions and other is out of the scope of the Committee's charter. The Committee will develop an approach over the next several meetings to provide regular review, discussion, and resolution of relevant suggestions coming from public communications.

The members discussed preparation for the upcoming public hearings. Ms. Christiansen reported that press releases about the hearings have been circulated. Members agreed that there should be a short presentation at the start of each hearing session to summarize the Committee's charge and provide relevant education on its focus.

5) Work Plan

Mr. Zagorec reviewed current plans for further interviews. Members agreed that the Committee should plan on scheduling a special meeting if needed to accommodate an interview with Matt Knickerbocker, town administrator for Wilton. Mr. Zagorec is continuing to work on plans for interviews with the Town Selectpersons and possibly with the Town Clerk. Members agreed to postpone scheduling interviews with others previously identified, or to incorporate those discussions into general interviews with towns where applicable.

Mr. Hendrick provided an update on his progress on the "level-set" research.

The members discussed ideas for conducting interviews with the several towns identified for research. It was agreed to form three three-member teams to conduct these interviews. Mr. Zagorec will make the team assignments as well as the assignment of towns to be interviewed by each team. Members also reviewed and discussed a draft document provided by Mr. Zagorec with suggested questions for these interviews. It was agreed that the outline of these questions will also serve as the basis for team reports back to the Committee on the findings of each interview.

6. Planning Future Agendas

It was suggested to spend time reviewing comments received after each public hearing, if time permits.

It was suggested that a future agenda should include time to discuss the apparent costs/benefits of a town administrator, based on information gathered from the interviews with the towns having this position.

It was suggested to have a significant portion of an agenda to discuss members' current sense of direction for the Committee, perhaps in a March timeframe, after hearing more interviews and having the results of the individual town interviews.

7. Adjournment

Motion to adjourn at 9:03pm by Ms. Christiansen , seconded by Mr. Robbins . All in favor.

Next meeting January 23, 2025, 7:00 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by
Michael Rettger