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# TOWN OF BURLINGTON

## Meeting Minutes

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Minutes need to be posted within 30 days or 2 meetings of the board – Draft minutes can be posted and revised at a later date

DEPT./BOARD: General Bylaw Review Committee

DATE: February 16, 2021

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

PLACE: Virtual via Zoom

### MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chair Scott Martin, Vice Chair Phyllis Neufeld, Sandra MacKay, David Miller, Wendy Guthro

GUEST: Eileen Coleman, Assistant Conservation Administrator

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### Minutes

The meeting of the General Bylaw Review Committee was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Chair Scott Martin on February 16, 2021.

### Report from Stormwater Article Subcommittee

Subcommittee chair David Miller reported that the Subcommittee has made “a lot of progress” on reviewing and editing the Stormwater Article (Article IVX, Section 6). He said the Subcommittee had reviewed and edited about one-third of the Article and will be meeting again next Wednesday, February 24.

Eileen said that she incorporated the Subcommittee’s suggested changes so that the Article “flows the way you intended” and that work will continue at the next meeting. Scott commented that although changes to this Article are driven by federal regulations for specific wording, the Subcommittee has worked to rearrange some sections so that the Article is consistent with the format of other bylaws. Eileen said that although there are some technical specifications that are required, “we are totally open” to changes suggested by the Subcommittee. Scott thanked Eileen for the department’s cooperation with the Committee in working on this Article.

Wendy said that the Committee needed a consistent protocol for formatting the bylaws (fonts, numbering, indenting, etc.). She said that the Town of Winchester’s bylaws had been suggested to her as an example of appropriate and correct formatting. She said she would email the communication she received from the Social Law Library to all members, and asked Recording Clerk Irene Egan to explore the Winchester bylaws and report back to the committee about the style they are using.





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### Solar Panel Discussion

The Committee continued a discussion from previous meetings about the use of solar panels. Scott said he had a conversation with Monte Pearson, Chair of the Land Use Committee, about the issue of solar panels on new construction. He reported that Watertown has an ordinance that requires photovoltaic panels on any new construction or major modifications, and on the roofs of parking garages. In answer to Committee members' questions, Scott said that this ordinance did not discourage new construction in Watertown, and that solar panels can be a selling point for new buildings because they reduce energy expenses and can help to qualify a structure as a "green building." Scott said he would have more information for the Committee at the next meeting.

### Communication regarding bylaw proposals and proposed changes

Phyllis reminded the members that at a previous meeting, they had agreed that at each Committee meeting, the members would work on developing a process regarding new bylaws or amendments. This process would then be communicated to anyone proposing new bylaws or amendments, explaining the actions that are needed and the deadlines that must be met. The goal is to develop a process that is clear to Town residents, that involves this Committee earlier in the process, that provides for communication with other Town committees and departments as needed, and that produces suggested bylaws that are thoughtful and appropriately worded.

The members discussed possible communication methods, such as emailing various Town department and committee chairs, sending quarterly reminders, a zoom meeting with all department and committee chairs, a notation on every posted agenda, invitations to attend a Committee meeting to discuss preliminary ideas, and an information packet that could be distributed to anyone with a new bylaw or an amendment to propose.

The committee discussed the contents of an information packet that would be produced by this Committee. Wendy said that this information should include the steps to proposing a bylaw, how a proposed bylaw should be formatted, an invitation to attend a Committee meeting, and an example of a bylaw. She said that the instructions could be presented as a template with questions to be completed, such as: Is there a current bylaw addressing this issue? What is the title of your proposed bylaw? What is the goal of your proposed bylaw? What are the top three reasons that you are proposing this bylaw or amendment? Sandra suggested that a flow chart be included, of the process and deadlines. Phyllis offered to work on a template, with the goal of "something straightforward and not intimidating." Discussion will continue at the next meeting.

### Ad Hoc & Standing Committees

Continuing a discussion from the previous meeting, Scott said that there are 14 ad hoc committees in the Town. Several, such as the Audit Committee, are appointed for one year only with a specific task, i.e. the audit. Others, such as the Beautification Committee, are essentially self-appointed members. It is unclear which of the 14 committees is still meeting and what the goals are. Scott said that in his view, the Master Plan Steering





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committees should definitely be a standing committee (rather than ad hoc). There was a consensus that this change in the Master Plan Steering Committee be proposed at the May Town Meeting. Dave said that the other committees should be considered one at a time, to determine what was the impetus for forming the committee and the current objectives. Wendy said that one consideration in reviewing the committees is to determine which ones are State-mandated.

During the discussion of committees, Wendy suggested that the word “Review” be deleted from this Committee’s name, so that it would be “General Bylaw Committee.” Scott noted that the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee also has the word “review” in its name. Scott will mention this suggestion to Shari Ellis, Chair of the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee. The proposal was taken under advisement for further discussion at the next meeting.

### Adding members to this Committee

Scott proposed that the number of members of this Committee be increase from five to seven. He said that the workload of the committee was increasing, and that subcommittees would be needed to take on detailed review of the bylaws and proposed additions/amendments. He said there were not enough members to serve on these subcommittees without “burnout,” and noted that the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee has nine members. The Committee members had a positive response to this suggestion, but they asked “when and how” new members would be appointed/added. Scott said that he envisioned members coming on and leaving according to a staggered schedule, so that institutional knowledge would be maintained. He reviewed the terms of the current members. Scott will rewrite the current bylaw, changing the membership to seven members, and will present it for a vote at the next meeting.

### New business

Scott talked about the timing issue regarding when proposed bylaws/amendments are due for this Committee’s review. Currently, proposals are due to this Committee 45 days before Town Meeting. He noted that zoning bylaws/amendments are due to the Zoning Bylaw Review Committee 90 days before Town Meeting. He suggested that the timing for this Committee be increased from 45 days to 60 or possibly 90 days. Wendy commented that it is a balance between requiring a longer wait for those who want to propose/amend bylaws, and the Committee’s need to have enough time to conduct an adequate review of proposals. This topic was tabled and will be discussed at the next meeting.

Upon a motion by Sandra, seconded by Wendy, the minutes of the January 19 meeting were approved, 5-0-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

