

TOWN OF LINCOLN
AD HOC COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Selectboard Ad hoc Committee Meeting on Board (re)Organization
Monday, December 20, 2021 @ 6pm, Lincoln Town Office — In person and via Zoom

Present: Josiah Jackson, Serena Fox, Will Sipsey, Bay Jackson, Matt Atkins, Sally Taylor, Ann Moreau-Kensek and guests Dave Wetmore, Jamie Simpson and Elias Erwin.

1. Call to Order: Matt Atkins @ 6pm.

Matt approved the last meeting's minutes. Jo seconded.

2. Adjustments or Additions to the Agenda: Bay to discuss conversations she's had over the past month that relate to reorganization experiences and more.

3. Introductions/Guests: Dave Wetmore

4. Guest Presentations: Dave Wetmore

Summary

Dave shared his background in Zoning (Assistant Zoning Administrator and DRB coordinator in Middlebury) and a Zoning Board of Adjustments member in Lincoln many years ago. He fought hard back then to keep the structure as it is but now favors the DRB structure (also in Starksboro and New Haven). It makes sense:

- One board in charge of the quasi judicial decisions made
- The way we are currently set up allows for discrepancies and conflicts—simply *because* of the structure
- DRB would have the expertise to consistently review, have findings, facts and approvals. Makes Sense.
- Have (at least) one member of the DRB on the PC.

Additional notes: With a DRB you need to have an individual that does not mind a little friction and distress. He encourages us to consider a DRB with the understanding that one member of the DRB also be on the PC. Negative of what we have is that our current set up allows for some conflicts and delays. With a DRB, procedures could flow a little smoother.

Introductions/Guests: Jamie Simpson and Elias Erwin

Summary

Jamie: He's pleased with our "homework." Encouraged us to do what's best for us. Responsibilities and streamlining. Moving the right direction. Elias: He's had experience with Salisbury DRB...but also been in construction—and, therefore, has experience on both sides. DRB in his experience has been a streamlined process without overlap. Recommends that we do move to a DRB—a more focused group with more focused tasks. Suggested that the DRB and the PC have more frequent meetings.

Introductions/Guests: Bay reported on conversations with Spencer Harris, Denny Casey (PC in Starksboro) and Dean Bloch (Town Administrator in Charlotte)

Summary

Spencer Harris: Echo's thoughts already mentioned but also emphasized that he has frustration with the *people on the boards vs the structure of the boards*. Some people truly disrupt the flow. Also noticed that some new boards will add additional regulations and interpret things not as they were intended which can make things more difficult. Over planning can make zoning projects more expensive and sometimes unnecessarily prohibitive.

Denny Casey: Starksboro switch over = great. One stop shop. Beneficial for the community and

decreased the number of meetings and applicants had to attend. More efficient.

Dean Bloch: December 15th Charlotte made the official transition to a PC/DRB board structure ... took them 10 months of discussion. He mentioned a concern that the DRB would become the busier board and advised that the PC review regulations and bylaws in order to make the new structure work better.

Amending the regulations could reduce the workload. To create the board, they put it out to the community and then conducted interviews with interested people. 4-members were appointed—waiting to appoint the 5th member until they have a potential female to assure variety.

All arrows are pointing toward the clean and well oiled machine.

5. Questions and Discussion:

Asked to Dave: Sally asked about sub-committees? Dave said, typically, no. But do involve a DRB in the PC's proposals to the town. Matt mentioned that the PC has been so busy that they've not been able to PLAN. Is this too much work for the DRB? Dave thought not. 5-7 folks on the DRB is what Dave has seen and suggests. He also emphasized that it is critical to staff your board with someone who is excellent with crafting words and providing decisions, facts and conclusions. Dave applauded us for the efforts—and pointed to how critical they are.

General: Elias suggests a 5-member DRB with 2 alternates. Keep the board smaller with Alternates. Bay mentioned that someone suggested alternates be at all meetings so they are informed and up-to-date. Matt posed the question: Is there enough for the PC to do in the PC/DRB scenario? Would there be a potential to then over plan? Dave stepped in the reply that he does not see the downside of a PC not having enough work. Facilitate regulations that work for everybody...meet once a week, GREAT! Develop creative ways to make things more affordable and less onerous for people. Helping people with the process is our job. Make it easy. Elias: Mentioned the switch to unified bylaws was beneficial. Emphasized that planning is evolutionary: "Things will always change and that's part of the job—implement that into the bylaws."

6. Review and Discuss the Documents (and more)

Matt recommends an annual meeting (or quarterly) between the DRB and the PC. We need overlap. Essential. Maybe a semi-annual meeting with the select board as well. And have one or two overlapping members. Broad range of opinions and backgrounds = critical.

Jo a smaller board makes for more "skin in the game."

Sally stressed efficiency would be increased.

Bay noted that these changes and charges will necessarily attract a different sort of board member/person. New person to the community might not be the best match.

Sally likes that community members can ask if they want to be candidates and that the Selectboard interviews.

Serena stressed that a variety of folks on the board is essential to representing the whole community—and guaranteeing that the entire community is represented. Matt stressed that this should be the case on all boards. Bay suggested a reminder to the Selectboard that this is an important part of their considerations when appointing members to the boards.

Essential to redefine the regs. The regulations may no longer fit the town.

7. Ad Hoc Committee Charges

- This is our suggestion.
- This is how we feel it should be structured.

- And this is how we feel you should do it.
- Word-smith-er suggested for this process. Who can assist?

ACTION ITEM: Review The Players, Essentials and Lincoln Town documents supplied by Bay.

7. For Next Meeting

- Review key points in above-listed documents and weave them into our discussion.
Begin formulating our recommendations.
- Keep in mind: How do we make this easy for a Lincoln applicant?

Come with ideas and points we want to make that we'll weave into our recommendations. We'll get close to wrapping up so we can present to the Selectboard in February at their first meeting of the Month. We'll present what we adopt as a resolution that is a result of a multi-board committee.

Ann and Serena to work post meeting on final documentation—to present to this board for approval.

Matt motion to adjourn. Sally seconded.

Next Meeting January 10 at 6pm.