



## Remote Participation Study Committee

Date: **February 21, 2023**

Time: **7:30 – 9:30 pm**

Location: Virtual, via Zoom.

### Minutes

Attendance: Mustafa Varoglu, Eric Helmuth, Rachel Zsembery, Stacie Smith, and Janice Cagan-Teuber. Jim Feeney joined at 8:15.

### AGENDA

1. Review and accept meeting minutes from last meeting – 10 minutes
2. Public Comment - 10 minutes
3. Hybrid demo current and next steps – 60+ minutes
  - Review the pilot program participation and any feedback.
  - Update on which boards, commissions and committees are using which rooms and technology
  - **Discuss how much additional feedback to solicit from pilot program participants**
  - **Start planning for pilot program analysis and final report.**
4. Future business – 5 minutes

### Summary of Discussions:

Meeting began around 7:40 pm, once quorum was met. The Chair called the remote meeting to order.

Approval of minutes from last meeting were deferred to the next meeting.

There was no public comment.

The Committee reviewed pilot program participation and updates on board, commission and committees participation and use of rooms and technology.

- The ZBA held one hybrid meeting in the Town Hall Annex room using the Neat Board. They had 4 people present on-site and 2-3 off-site. They tested the

technology in different ways and agreed that it worked well enough, such that technology wouldn't hold them back. They considered the question of how to share a document that wasn't digital, but decided that most everything would have a digital version. Admitted it was unlikely and rare that they would have that. However, they didn't really find hybrid arrangements conducive – most members don't want to come in person, and would find it easier to be remote. Their interest in the pilot was a desire to allow the public to attend remotely in the case that all-virtual meeting permission ended. Agreed that having the full Board in person with remote public might be an option in the future, but they preferred to hold meetings virtually while this is an option – members were not excited to be coming in every other week given perceived Covid safety risks.

- They noted the issue of who is minding the gate, letting people in. Even with town staffing, the burden of managing a hybrid meeting is much higher.
- Remote Participation Study Committee members suggested that, at some point, the town might want to create some suggestions about which boards get to meet in what ways, based on the purposes of those groups and how they interact with presenters and the public. Different boards have different types of discussions and participants, lending themselves to remote, hybrid, or in person.
- The Disability Commission has had 3 hybrid meetings. They have gone well, people were happy with it. They had someone from the Town managing the technical details, and sent out the link to members to fill out the survey. For one meeting, a Zoom scheduling snafu led to the Select Board cutting the meeting short. Some people had difficulty hearing, but once alerted to the caption feature, it was no problem. Last week, town counsel and his assistant were presenting in person, and a few commission members were in person, plus 2 staff. In the HHS conference room. No trouble hearing. 6 people on site, 10 remote.
- ATED – not meeting hybrid. Diversity Task Group has had at least two hybrid meetings, would be good to get more responses on how it went.
- The tree committee has been meeting hybrid, it is working really well! See if they can give update on how it is going with the survey. No public, small committee, two town staff members on site who attend. More of a working committee. Good to capture the roles of the committees.
- Helpful to characterize the nature of the committee and the resources available to them in our report. Seems important to have sufficient trained staff to allow parity of experience for in-person and remote participants. Keep in mind that Town staff are over-extended to staff these meetings – for many, running tech and logistics for meetings is a burden, not their career choice.
- Is anyone using Owls? Long-range planning committee is meeting remotely and using the owls. They meet in the managers conference room, (which will

have a Neat Bar installed at some point). Eric will ask the chair and participants to fill out the survey.

#### Need for Additional Feedback:

- The group discussed whether it would be worthwhile to schedule calls with committee and board chairs to learn more about their experiences. They agreed they should look at the current feedback from the surveys to see if it gives enough information or what they would want to learn more about.

#### Planning for Analysis and Report Writing:

The group discussed the following key points for the report:

- Effectiveness by roles of committees may determine which committees hybrid works best for (e.g., Adjudicative/ Decision making Committee vs. working committees)
- Importance of presence of Town Staff to help manage meetings.

They suggested the following tasks/roles:

- Rachel - editing, (writing, analysis)
- Mustafa – writing, analysis
- Eric – editing
- Alex – technology writing – bring up to date since last report, new rooms, evolution of what we've learned about technology (i.e., no more Owls)
- Stacie – editing, (writing, analysis)
- Janice – editing
- Guillermo – ??
- Jim – to nudge people to fill out surveys

Next meeting: March 7 at 7:30 pm.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm by a vote of 6-0.

**Summary table of hybrid meeting participants**

Feb 21, 2023 RPSC meeting

Hybrid Pilot Summary Status

#	Committee, Board or Commission	In Pilot?	Proposed Room	First Hybrid Meeting Date	Time	Technology	Committee Support	
2	<del>Tourism and Economic Development*</del>	No	<del>TH Annex First Floor (or TM Conf. Room?)</del>			<del>Two Owls</del>	<del>Mustafa</del>	Confirmed not participating
3	Diversity Task Group	Yes	Town Hall Annex 2nd Floor	Thursday, Dec. 8th	6:45 PM	NeatBarPro, 2 Flat Panels	Alex	2 meetings (12/8 and 2/9) with survey results + 1 chair
4	LGBTQIA Rainbow Commission	Yes	HHS Conference Room	Thurs, Nov. 17	6:30 PM	NeatBarPro, 2 Flat Panels	Mustafa	Go through Jill Harvey (Jim)
5	Disability Commission	Yes	HHS Conference Room	Wed. Dec. 21	4:00 PM	NeatBarPro, 2 Flat Panels	Janice	3 hybrid meetings, 6 people onsite, 10 remote. One Chair has filled out survey, Is survey accessible for Jaws.
6	Arlington Human Rights Commission	Likely (TBC)	HHS Conference Room	Wed. Dec. 21	7:30 PM	NeatBarPro, 2 Flat Panels	Stacie	Only a member of the public, no members or chair responses Go through Jill Harvey (Jim)
7	Tree Committee	Yes	Town Hall Annex 2nd Floor	Wednesday, Nov. 9th	7:30 PM	NeatBarPro, 2 Flat Panels	Eric	12/14 only responses,
8	Zoning Board of Appeals	Likely (TBC)	Town Hall Annex 2nd Floor	Test on Feb 13	7:30 PM	NeatBarPro, 2 Flat Panels	Mustafa	Demo'ed on 2/13.
9	Arlington Redevelopment Board	Confirmed no sound issues	Community Center Big Hall A or B	Monday, November 21	7:30 PM	NeatBoard	Rachel	Confirmed not participating
10	Clean Energy Future Committee	Yes	Town Hall Annex 2nd Floor	Friday Dec 16	8:15 AM	NeatBarPro, 2 Flat Panels	Eric	1/20, 12/16, + upcoming meeting. 1 chair response (11/9)
11	Finance Committee	Yes	APD Community Room	Jan 30	7:00 pm	NeatBoard	Alex	Admin told Jim it was successful for 1 <sup>st</sup> meeting Ask to fill out survey, no results yet.

	Long Range Planning Committee	Need to ask	Town Manager's Conference room	Monthly (2/17)	8:00 AM	2 Owls, will be upgraded to NeatBar w monitor	Eric	Steve DeCoursey participates in person, Len Diggins, participates remotely <a href="#">Add to Survey</a>