

TOWN OF ARLINGTON
TOWN MEETING PROCEDURES COMMITTEE

September 25, 2023

Call to Order

The meeting of the Town Meeting Procedures Committee was called to order by Town Moderator Greg Christiana on Wednesday, March 2, 2023, at 7:35 p.m. via the Town’s Zoom channel.

Quorum

A quorum was present: Adam Auster, Greg Christiana, Rebecca Gruber, Christopher Moore, and John Worden.

Hybrid Meeting

Mr. Christiana said that remote participation in the meeting was authorized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Public Comment

No Comments

There were no other persons present or remotely present.

Disposition of Minutes

Mr. Moore moved to approve the draft minutes of the August 2, 2023, meeting, with the following correction under “Documentation of Procedures”:

MOTION:
Corrected Minutes

- Add “version August 2nd 2023” to the reference to “Town Meeting Guidelines [DRAFT]”

Ms. Gruber seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

New Business

MBTA Communities Process

Mr. Auster proposed a way to structure consideration of the Redevelopment Board’s recommended compliance with the MBTA Communities Act at the upcoming special town meeting.

He suggested periods of informal and formal consideration, with a break in between.

Amendments

He also suggested that if Town Meeting wants to make changes to the Board’s recommendation, it should do so by referring the question back to the Board.

Such a motion could ask the Board to revise the proposal along specific lines and return it to the special town meeting.

*Informal and
Formal
Consideration*

Mr. Auster referred to “Proposal: Informal Consideration vs. Regular Consideration” as an example of a rule that would enable Town Meeting to consider the proposal in stages. A copy of this proposal is appended to these minutes.

Discussion touched on the roles of Town Meeting and the Redevelopment Board, the options available to the Moderator, and the extent to which it may be advisable to depart from our regular way of doing business.

Mr. Christiana said he would take the ideas under advisement.

*Town Meeting
Guidelines*

Mr. Christiana shared “Town Meeting Guidelines [DRAFT]” dated August 2. A copy of this document is appended to these minutes.

He said he wanted to share these guidelines with members before the special town meeting, to explain how he intends to run the meeting.

Consent Agenda

He told the Committee that there probably would not be a consent agenda for the special town meeting, and that he might omit that section from the information he shares this fall.

*Distribution of
Proposed
Amendments*

In response to a question, Mr. Christiana said he would add to the guidelines information about using a Town copier to print the proposals he requires be distributed to Town Meeting members in order to be considered.

Committee members discussed the organization of the guidelines and the value of explaining these procedures to Town Meeting members. They identified areas where clarification or elaboration could be helpful.

*MOTION:
Adjournment*

Mr. Moore moved that the meeting adjourn.

Ms. Gruber seconded the motion.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:23 p.m.

Adam Auster
September 26, 2023

Documents attached to these minutes:

1. Notice of meeting
2. “Proposal: Informal Consideration vs. Regular Consideration”
3. “Town Meeting Guidelines [DRAFT]”

Town of Arlington
Town Meeting Procedures Committee
January 4, 2024
Hybrid Meeting

Call to order: The meeting of the Town Meeting Procedures Committee was called to order by Town Moderator Greg Christiana on Thursday, January 4, 2024 at 7:35pm.

Quorum: All Committee members were present: Adam Auster, Greg Christiana, Rebecca Gruber (via Zoom), Christopher Moore and John Worden (via Zoom).

Public Comments: No members of the public initially present. Later, Archange Polynice joined via Zoom. Revisited this agenda item at 8:30pm; no public comment made.

Minutes of Prior Meetings: Committee members had not had opportunity prior to the evening's meeting to review the September 25, 2023 meeting minutes. Review and acceptance of the September and January minutes will be scheduled for a brief future meeting.

Rules for announcements and complimentary resolutions at Town Meeting:

- Mr Christiana received a request from the Chamber of Commerce to make a report to Town Meeting re: the Chamber's past year accomplishments. The advice from Town Counsel to Mr. Christiana is that per Town article only Town boards and committees (the Chamber of Commerce is affiliated with the Town, but is not a Town board or committee) may make reports to Town Meeting and that announcements pertain to future, not past, events.
- Introduction of a non-Town organization to Town Meeting should be made by a Town official or Town Meeting member
- Town Counsel advises against announcements regarding political campaigns and local ballot measures, including requests for volunteers to support such efforts.
- Presenting to Town Meeting complimentary resolutions in appreciation or sympathy are appropriate. Resolutions in condemnation are not. Town Counsel cautions against votes on complimentary resolutions, which may lack adequate public notice. Applause or voice vote might be more appropriate.
- Mr. Christiana will make additions to the Town Meeting guidelines accordingly.

Warrant Article for specifying Annual Town Meeting start date

- Discussion about the specific dates. February 1 is also the date by which the Select Board has to set the date for the Town Annual Election. Recommended to change the date in the draft from the fourth Monday in May to the second Monday in May. Change to "second Monday in May":
 - Moved approval: Mr. Auster
 - Seconded: Mr. Moore
 - Vote: unanimous

- Warrant article will be “inserted at the request of the Town Meeting Procedures Committee.”
- Motion by Mr. Moore to transmit the warrant article text to the Select Board
 - Seconded: Mr. Auster
 - Vote: unanimous
- Motion by Mr. Moore to present amended proposed text change of the Town bylaw to the Select Board
 - Seconded: Mr. Worden
 - Vote: unanimous

New Business

- Mr. Christiana stated there was no imminent need for a future meeting other than to approve the September and January meeting minutes.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 8:40pm.

Moved: Mr. Worden

Seconded: Mr. Moore

Rebecca Gruber