**SHARON GOVERNANCE STUDY COMMITTEE MINUTES**

*September 14, 2022*

The Sharon Governance Study Committee meeting was called to order at 7:30 pm by Chair Paul Pietal.

**Member attendance**

| Arguimbau: Present  | Carver: Present  | Geller: Absent  | Goodman: Absent |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Keenan: Present | King: Present | Monahan: Present  | Pietal: Present |
| Rangarajan: Present  | Wluka: Present  | Michalek: Present |  |

**Subcommittee updates**

 none

**Liaison updates**

none

**General updates**

Also in attendance was Mark Fine of MAPC.

**Correspondence** - Chair spoke of information provided by Mark Fine of MAPC regarding our concerns about Planning Board structure. Also information from Isaac Gerofsky from Sharon Cable regarding options for increasing and improving communication of information throughout town. Both documents in meeting folder on the drive.

**Planning for the Public Forum** - September 19, 2022. Chair led off with information – start time 7PM at the Recreation Center. The survey has been placed on the town’s home web page. Paul, Matt, Phil and Ganesh attended the Select Board meeting last night to give an update about the Committee’s activity. The Personnel Board will meet tomorrow night with the only agenda item being the topic of abandoning the Personnel Board and changing to a professional service.

Mark Fine from MAPC spoke briefly regarding Planning Board info he had put together from comparative towns – Holliston, Hopkinton, Wayland, Southboro and Acton – numbers of planning board members, length of terms and whether elected or appointed. State law (Chap.41 Sec. 81A) sets make-up and terms, can choose between appointed or elected. Sharon was not out of whack with 5 members being elected for 5 year terms being the norm. Most of the other towns had incumbents running much of the time (vs new people) as well. Some issues to consider:

1. Associate members who act when others are absent or cannot participate;
2. Appointment of a Town Planner done by the Planning Board or by the Town Administrator? Who does the planner report to?

Back to Public Forum – After welcome, which should include mention of the Committee’s charge, have a survey recap. Rob Carver could perhaps discuss the major points and a voting recap. Chair will also mention in a positive way the need to seek better availability of information as well as clarity and better communication between the Town boards and committees. Discussion regarding how the meeting should go – similar to Town Meeting? Best to let the meeting go more unstructured. Chair reviewed the topics to be discussed by sub-committee chairs or reps-

BOARDS & COMMITTEES -Select Board size ---- Finance Committee role --- Library Trustees and Planning Board elected vs. appointed (Explain Library Trustees HAVE to be elected and Planning board is still under consideration by the Committee)---Personnel Board change still under consideration.

TOWN GOVERNMENT – Form of government ---citizenship voting ----electronic voting and remote participation --- Day of Town Meeting (reference Consent Agenda mentioning town meeting improvements)

Chair can decide who speaks about what. Members are free to go to the mic or speak to clarify a point. Last meeting’s beginning was a good example – Paul first then subcommittee chairs. That discussion got going topic by topic and some members thought that was getting too intricate for public forum. Discussed whether we needed to start off with our survey questions or just see what questions come from the group. Survey gave us added info but not decisive. Best to get to public questions sooner than later. Also important to have numbers of total town voters ready when discussing the numbers that responded to the survey. Chair expressed complete confidence in those members dealing with numbers from our survey results- Rob, Ganesh and Matt. Important to allow plenty of time for public comment. If lots of new people, there will be more questions. We should be sure to allow for them to voice their concerns. Some may just be there to see where we are in the process. Keep the meeting moving.

Discussion of including and responding in our report to topics not within our charge – two examples; the train station parking issues and ranked choice voting. We have discussed neither. Most believed the train station was completely out of our charge. The ranked choice voting did pertain to governance, though was not a topic we had discussed at any meeting. The citizenship voting issue was not under our charge either, but we did take it up and eventually include it in our topics. It may be possible that we could take a position on ranked choice voting, though it is late in the process.

**Review of Recap for Public Forum** –

Opening – what we’ll be talking about; topics one by one; bigger ones first then lesser topics. Paul will work with Phil and Matt to get that organized. Thoughts that we should have a timekeeper to keep folks from rambling as well as someone monitoring the “chat room”. Questions about wifi capability have been asked and addressed by the town so hopefully we will have better connection for this meeting than last.

Discussion of where we are in the process of getting out notification of the Public Forum date and time. Emails have gone out to all Boards and Committee. Ganesh has, and Phil will, get the notice out on social media as before. Paul will look into finding the spreadsheet list of community groups and request Melissa help get the notice that Ganesh put together out to those groups by email.

**Minutes**

**Approval of minutes -** Minutes from September 7th will be voted on at the next full meeting.

**Topics not anticipated within 48 hours of posting**

Phil called attention to an article in the Globe pertaining to the idea of recall/remove possibilities being needed when people commit crimes. The Boards sub-committee needs to continue the recall/removal discussion at its next meeting.

Next meeting – Wednesday September 21, 2022 will be subcommittees. Town Meeting subcommittee will not meet. Chair reminded all that we need to begin thinking about the writing of the final report. Start that at the September 28th meeting. MAPC has indicated they would help, if needed, with that.

**Adjourn**

Seeing no other business to come before the committee, Mr. Pietal adjourned the meeting at 8:30 pm.

Submitted by Peg Arguimbau