



CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE  
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

MEETING MINUTES

FRIDAY, July 1, 2022

11:00 a.m.

Conference Room A

City Hall Complex, 1 Junkins Avenue

Portsmouth, NH 03801

1. Welcome and Call to Order at 11:00 a.m.
2. Roll Call: Councilor John Tabor, Councilor Vincent Lombardi and Councilor Kate Cook present. Also present was Suzanne M. Woodland, Deputy City Manager/Deputy City Attorney (DCM); City Attorney Robert Sullivan; Environmental Planner Peter Britz and Recreation Director Todd Henley (by Zoom)
3. Committees/Ordinance Review:

Discussion of Parks/Recreation Options – The DCM, Henley and Britz provided background and input with regard to the current function and responsibilities of the Recreation Board, the Peirce Island Committee, Trees and Greenery Committee, and the Conservation Commission. Topics included pros and cons of creating a Parks and Recreation Committee or other entity with a broader vision beyond athletic fields and formal programs to better support and evolve passive recreation and greenspace management and acquisition. Discussion that rail-trail will open up more recreation opportunities.

Councilor Lombardi offered comment on membership of any newly established committee; namely it should include individual(s) with park management or similar experience.

Councilor Tabor indicated his support for a committee that could support the thoughtful acquisition of more greenspace and improve water access.

Councilor Cook emphasized the need to steward all our existing parks and greenspaces and not just Prescott Park or a few. Further discussion amongst staff and Committee members regarding need for good stewardship.

No action taken but staff to (1) identify/provide list or map of current municipal properties that are parks, fields, greenspace or conservation land to help facilitate next conversation on the topic and (2) develop a draft mission statement to help Governance Committee further explore this potential.

Audit Committee – Councilor Lombardi shared his view that the Audit Committee should be comprised of City Councilors only and not citizen members. Reference was made to the

Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) guidelines for audit committees. Chair Councilor Cook asked the City Attorney to opine on whether Councilor Tabor and she could share their views on the Audit Committee membership given that they also sit on the Audit Committee. The City Attorney agreed that they may speak to the issue.

Thereafter, both shared their view that given the City's Council's responsibility for governance and finance, the Audit Committee should be comprised of only City Councilors. It should be a subcommittee of the City Council. Councilors Cook, Tabor and Lombardi all otherwise indicated support for continuation of an Audit Committee.

Brief discussion that Subcommittee could engage an expert in municipal finance if it were to become necessary.

City Attorney will draft a proposed ordinance change for the next Governance Committee meeting.

4. Committee Rotation Schedule – Councilor Cook distributed information to the Committee members from the City Clerk's office relative to current appointments and terms as background. No action taken.
5. Mid-Year Council Report – Councilor Cook reviewed the draft slides she prepared for the Mid-Year Council Report. Councilor Tabor made a suggestion to include in the future work the evaluation of how to handle appointments between the time of election results being received and swearing in of Councilors in January. Councilor Lombardi moved to accept the presentation with the amendment suggested by Councilor Tabor. Seconded by Tabor and all in favor.
6. Public Comment: Petra Huda (re audit committee); Sue Polidura (re audit committee); Liza Hewitt (re audit committee and statements made at last meeting); Zolita Morgan (re use of acronyms, meeting times); Petra Huda (additional statement re membership of Planning Board); and Claire Kittridge (re appointment of members to land use boards).
7. Other Business – Brief discussion of the additional items as outlined in the agenda that will be discussed at future meetings. Councilor Tabor asked when the Governance Committee would discuss timing of appointments.

Councilor Lombardi will work staff to draft a mission statement/purpose section with staff for recommended Historical Archive Blue Ribbon Committee and bring back to next meeting.

8. Adjournment – Motion by Councilor Lombardi to adjourn and seconded by Councilor Tabor. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 12:12 p.m.

Date of the next Governance Committee meeting: July 25, 2022 at 10:00 am

Meeting Minutes prepared by Suzanne M. Woodland, Deputy City Manager/Deputy City Attorney

Approved by Governance Committee on: August 29, 2022