



**CITY OF PORTSMOUTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE
GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY July 31, 2023 – 10:00 a.m.
Conference Room A
City Hall Complex, 1 Junkins Avenue
Portsmouth, NH 03801**

1. **Welcome and Call to Order** – 10:04 a.m.
2. **Roll Call** – Councilor Kate Cook, Councilor Vincent Lombardi, and Councilor John Tabor via Zoom. Also present were Robert Sullivan, Senior Counsel, and Peter Rice, Public Works Director.
3. **Review and Approval of Minutes** – Councilor Lombardi moved to approve the July 17, 2023 minutes. Councilor Tabor seconded. By roll call, all in favor.
4. **Old Business**

- a. **Sustainability BR Committee Conversion Ordinance – Status update**

The Sustainability Committee will provide two versions of defining and structuring terms and requests Governance to review. Then it is ready for the City Council.

- b. **Election Disclosures – Administrative Ordinances 1.902, Council Rule 21, and City Charter Section 3.8**

- i. **Current Election Disclosure Requirements - Status Update:** The City Clerk has already corrected the disclosures form to comply with the current ordinance. This was done after the last election.

Motion by Councilor Tabor to consult with Public Works Director, Peter Rice, on the Sidewalk Ordinance now and instead of later. Council Lombardi seconded. All in favor by roll call vote.

- ii. **Discussion of Any Proposed Changes to the Ordinance for 2025:**

The Committee reviewed the ordinance line by line and agreed to include in Section C the mention of in-kind gifts valuing \$100 or more to be disclosed. Legal council was requested to propose wording.

The Committee discussed Section F, Violations, which applies to elected officers and not to PAC or unelected. Together with legal advice, they discussed possible recourse of unethical conduct in any campaign. The State Code of Ethics - Public Integrity by the Attorney General's office is to be consulted.

Disclosures: The Committee discussed the need to include wording that disclosures will be posted online. They asked legal counsel to provide possible language for review.

iii. Council Rule 21, Conflict of Interest: is consistent with charter rule.

c. City Council Preliminary Draft Ethics Policy

Councilor Cook listed the four areas addressed. They will be forwarded to the legal department for inclusion in the draft.

5. New Business

a. Sidewalk Policy – Peter Rice, Director of Public Works

Director Rice summarized the sidewalk policy materials as to be brick sidewalks in historical districts, and other places to be concrete. However, a property owner can have bricks by paying the difference between concrete and bricks. This policy keeps the sidewalks consistent, uniform, and cost efficient.

The Committee posed questions for brick sidewalks outside of historic districts, extending driveways to the sidewalk, porous materials, and consideration for trees on sidewalks.

Councilor Cook suggested inviting a representative from the Historic Commission to share their perspective. Councilor Tabor requested an account of how many blocks outside the historic district still have brick sidewalks.

b. Mid-Year Report to the City Council

Councilor Cook will provide a quick and oral update at the August 7 City Council meeting of the business discussed over the last 6 months. Councilor Lombardi will contribute.

6. Public Comment

Petra Huda (comments on Secretary of State’s RSA which can help with language on election disclosures and ethics)

7. Announcements - Next Governance Committee meeting: August 7, 2023

8. Adjournment

Motion by Councilor Lombardi to adjourn, seconded by Councilor Tabor and by roll call vote all in favor. Adjourned 11:37 a.m.

Minutes Prepared by: Margaret Carnahan, Portsmouth Library/Office Manager

Minutes Approved: August 7, 2023