

Advisory Committee
October 7, 2015
Felix Juliani Meeting Room, Town Hall

Tom Frisardi called the meeting of the Wellesley Advisory Committee to order at 6:00pm. Those present included Mary Crown, Tom Fitzgibbons, Chad Harris, John Hartnett, Mike Hluchyj, Mark Kaplan, Michael Mastrianni, Frank Pinto, Alena Poirier, Sara Raveret, Mason Smith, Ria Stolle, Scott Tarbox, and Kathleen Woodward.

Citizen Speak:

No one wished to speak at this time.

Schools and Permanent Building Committee presentation of school security upgrade budget:

Wendy Paul from the School Committee, Superintendent of Schools David Lussier, and Matt King from the Permanent Building Committee presented the updated cost estimates for the school security upgrade proposal. A Budget Development Comparison chart showed the comparisons between the \$1,759,417.20 budget (60% design estimate) and the \$2,454,374 budget (100% designer estimate). The appropriation request would be funded with short-term borrowing.

BOS and FMD presentation of budget for design of Police Station roof and building envelope repairs:

Barbara Searle from the BOS, Joe McDonough, the Director of the FMD, Police Chief Terrence Cunningham, Deputy Chief of Police Jack Pilecki, and Lieutenant Marie Cleary were present to discuss the needed repairs to the Police Station roof and building envelope. Simpson, Gumpertz and Heger, Inc., completed their study and recommendations on what is needed to be done. The architect design costs are estimated to be \$100,000 and construction costs are estimated to be \$1,955,000; these costs need to be vetted and could go up.

Public Hearing on the Warrant for Special Town Meeting on November 2, 2015:

The regular meeting was adjourned at 7:10pm to allow for the Special Town Meeting Public Hearing with no objections.

The Special Town Meeting Public Hearing was called to order at 7:15pm.

Each article was presented individually and the public was invited to comment.

Article 3:

Ann-Mara Lanza spoke of her objection to the Town Government Study Committee's (TGSC) proposals, which would create a town manager form of government. She does not think the proposed changes would fit Wellesley's culture of volunteerism.

Marcia Testa Simonson spoke as the Vice Chair of the Board of Health (BOH). She and the other members of the BOH object to Article 3 and the proposal that the Health Department Director be appointed by, report to, and potentially be fired by a Town Manager.

Lloyd Tarlin, also a member of the BOH, reiterated Marcia's comments. He pointed out the proposed changes conflict with Massachusetts General Law. He believes the elected BOH should appoint, evaluate, and terminate their own director.

Andy Patten spoke in favor of the TGSC's proposals to create a Town Manager position. He thinks the proposals to the budget process, in particular, would be a great improvement over our current system.

David Himmelberger agrees that there could be some benefits to greater centralization and accountability, but he is concerned about the degree of control given to one person in our system of collaboration. He thinks the proposals are for such significant changes that we should take the time to get it right. He thinks the deadline of bringing the Special Act before Special Town Meeting now is too tight.

Janet King believes that the Town would benefit from more coordination among the departments.

Susan Hurwitz spoke in favor of creating a Town Manager position. She supports creating a Town Strategic Plan, but she notes that in our current structure, there is no one with leadership authority to implement it. She spoke of her experience as the Chair of the HR Board and stated that, in general, boards do not make good managers of staff. The boards often meet just once a month and the volunteers rotate from year to year. She said that inconsistency in the Town's HR practices cost the Town money. She believes a Town Manager would free the boards to do the policy/mission work they joined the board to do and would allow Advisory to focus on the big budget picture. Susan was on the search committee when our current Executive Director was hired, and she said the candidates who applied for the job were very junior. She thinks the Town needs a job with substance to attract the kind of candidates the Town would want to hire.

Beth Sullivan Woods, the Chair of the Board of Library Trustees, objected to the TGSC's proposals. She thinks improvements in Town government could be made without the need for bylaws or a Special Act. She is concerned that approval of the Special Act would override the Library Trustees' authority over the library.

Rusty Kellogg spoke in favor of creating a Town Manager position. He does not think the Town should take more time deciding on the TGSC's proposals. He thinks a search for a Town Manager would attract a stronger pool of candidates than a search for an Executive Director, and he notes that the current Executive Director's retirement next year provides a unique time for the Town to make this change.

Laura Fragasso stressed the importance of defining the potential Town Manager's job description and priorities. The Town should set up the position so that the person can/will be successful in it.

Raina McManus, a member of the Natural Resources Commission (NRC), realizes the potential benefits to the Town with a Town Manager form of government and she supports the creation of a strategic plan; however, she is concerned about the degree of authority given to a Town Manager with regards to staff and the budgets. She noted that the Wellesley NRC is the only elected NRC in the state. She worries that a Town Manager might weaken the mission of the NRC.

Peg Metzger, the Town Moderator, urged anyone intending to propose amendments to the TGSC's recommendations at the Special Town Meeting to please notify her, the TGSC, and Advisory as soon as possible and to attend the Town Moderator's Meeting on October 20th at 8:30am in Town Hall.

Marla Robinson, Vice Chair of the Library Trustees, disagrees with the significant differences in the termination policies for the Town Manager position and for the Board Directors under the TGSC's proposals. She thinks the authority to appoint an acting Town Manager should be given to the BOS, not the Town Manager. She would like to see the Town Manager's contract with the Town posted online.

Article 4:

David Himmelberger stated that he thought greater standardization of the Town's HR processes would be good; however, he thinks the bylaw language giving the Town Manager the authority to hire, promote, and

terminate employees should be scrutinized. He thinks the Police Chief should have autonomy over the Police Department.

Article 6:

Raina McManus stated that she does not object to the creation of a Planning and Land Management Division, but she voiced her objection to the inclusion of the NRC and the Wetlands Protection Committee in the proposed division. She doesn't agree with the proposed reporting structure—the NRC Director would report to a Deputy Town Manager, who would report to a Town Manager, who would report to the BOS. She questioned how one elected board would “report” to another elected board.

Catherine Johnson, Vice Chair of the Planning Board, suggested that language should be included in the proposal that explains how operations would work under the proposed division. She thinks that coordinating the permitting processes would not address the bigger problem Wellesley faces, which is that it is built out.

Susan Wright observed that the background for this proposal has been in the works for ten years with previous Town studies involving the Planning Board, the NRC, residents, and consultants. She thinks we should formalize the process of bringing everyone together.

Laura Fragasso does not agree with including the NRC in the proposed PLMD.

A motion was made to close the STM Public Hearing at 8:50pm. The motion was seconded and approved by a show of hands.

Tom Frisardi reopened the regular session meeting of the Wellesley Advisory Committee at 8:55pm with no objections.

Advisory Committee discussion of motions expected to be made at STM:

Advisory members discussed possible motions to the Special Act and the amendments to the Town's Bylaws.

Liaison Reports:

An update was given on the recent proposals to address HHU; many in the community oppose the recommendations and plan to organize their concerns. It was reported that the Library Trustees plan to meet with Town Counsel to propose to be “carved out” of the TGSC's recommendations. The TGSC liaisons reported on recent changes made to the TGSC's proposals.

Approval of Minutes:

None were presented.

Old/New Business:

There was no discussion on old or new business.

The Advisory Committee will meet at 8:00am on October 10th in the Kingsbury Room in the Police Station.

Tom Frisardi adjourned the Advisory Committee meeting at 10:10pm.