



**Residents' Advisory Committee (RAC) on February 11, 2020**  
**10:00 am – 11:00 am**  
**First Floor Meeting Room, Town Hall**

**Residents' Advisory Committee Members Present:** Mr. Jim Pistrang, Ms. Connie Kruger

**Members Absent:** Ms. Keisha Dennis

**Town Staff Present:** Ms. Angela Mills, Exec. Assistant to Town Manager and note taker for this meeting

**Special Guest:** None

**Others Present:** None

**Meeting called to order at 10:07 AM.**

Mr. Pistrang and Ms. Kruger reviewed the minutes from the 11/13/2019 meeting and made some changes due to spelling and context. The review of the minutes highlighted some important topics for review by the members of RAC. Several typographical errors needed to be fixed.

With corrections and the addition of page numbers, the members of RAC voted 2-0-1 to accept the minutes as submitted.

**Topics to review as suggested by review of previous meetings' minutes:**

- Follow-up with people who have been interviewed.
- Sample post-interview people and reach out to them for feedback regarding the process.
- Send a follow-up survey to all applicants and add a secondary request for demographic information.
- Work with Ms. Kruger on a follow-up form/survey for all applicants.

**Discussion continued around the collection of applicants' demographic information, and, how to encourage applicants to respond to these questions.**

Mr. Pistrang noted that for many individuals, an inquiry into economic status is a non-starter.

Mr. Pistrang admitted that he is “not a fan” of asking people for demographic information details a second time. He noted it might be more helpful to ask about the experience while filling out a Community Activity Form (CAF). For example:

- Did you fill out demographic section?
  - Why?

- Why not?

Ms. Kruger and Mr. Pistrang spent a few moments reflection on the genesis of the Residents' Advisory Committee (RAC) and the work that has transpired.

The purpose of making the process of interviews and selections to boards/committees/commissions more transparent has been accomplished by the work of the current RAC members. It was noted, that the perception might be as valuable as the reality of this endeavor. Ms. Kruger and Mr. Pistrang were on different sides of the Charter issue and both of their opinions came to the RAC. Their ability to work together on building strong boards/committees/commissions speaks volumes to the integration of community members into the new Town Government.

Ms. Mills reminded the members of RAC that spring and summer of 2020 will bring a completely new round of vacancies with the need for interviews and appointments. She noted that an email alert would be sent later in February to alert Chairs of boards/committees/commissions to their role in identifying people who have reached their two-term limit or highlighting those individuals who have chosen to end their volunteer service.

**Review of recent interviews:**

Mr. Pistrang related that he took part in ten interviews since the November 2019 RAC meeting. He interviewed residents for the Council on Aging, Amherst Cultural Council, and the Shade Tree Committee. Ms. Kruger participated in several interviews for the Energy and Climate Action Committee and the Council on Aging.

Ms. Kruger and Mr. Pistrang both were amazed by the skill set from all applicants for these volunteer positions. Ms. Kruger reflected that several people who were not selected for the ECAC the first time around, decided to interview again for this new vacancy on the ECAC. She lamented having to reject some individuals a second time.

**Interview 'windows:'**

Ms. Kruger noted that there was a long lapse between interviews for the ECAC vacancy. She highlighted that almost a month passed before the recommendation was made by the Town Manager for the spot to be filled. Ms. Mills noted that the process did fall during the winter holidays and that several candidates were traveling for the holidays. Ms. Kruger asked if RAC should create a tighter timeline for selections to be made. Mr. Pistrang remained reluctant to exclude applicants and felt that a certain amount of flexibility would ensure a deep applicant pool and a considered appointment.

The suggestion was made to poll the Chair of the board/committee/commission that has the vacancy and see if they would like to develop a more cohesive interview calendar.

Mr. Pistrang noted that he will be sitting in on the upcoming interviews for the vacancy on the Board of License Commissioners.

The members reviewed their travel calendars for the upcoming months.

No public comments were made.

It was noted, that from the time of the interview, to the review by the subcommittee for appointments of the Town Council, to final appointment recommendation and verification by the Town Council – the entire process was currently taking about two and a half weeks.

The next RAC meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, April 7, 2020. Ms. Mills would find a meeting space.

**Meeting adjourned at 10:55AM.**