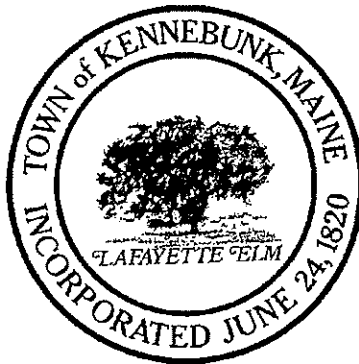


Town of Kennebunk, Maine



Charter Commission MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, January 11, 2023

In-person meeting, Town Hall, 3rd Floor, 1 Summer Street, Kennebunk

This meeting was held in person and televised on Cable TV Channel 5.
It is available for public viewing at any time at TownHallStreams.com.

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:30pm by Chair Christian Babcock.
 - a. **Roll Call:**
 - i. Members present: Christian Babcock, Chris Babbidge, Janice Vance, Brenda Robinson, Chris Cluff, Richard Smith, Ted Trainer, Susan Bloomfield, Stephen Sayers.
 - ii. Absent: none.
 - iii. Also attending: Merton Brown, Town Clerk; Miriam Whitehouse, Select Board Member.
 - b. **Opening Comments:** C. Babcock directed members to a white board listing rules for all meetings:
 - Stay on task;
 - Be present;
 - Raise hand to ask questions/make comments;
 - Make point;
 - Questions slated for later discussion will be put into a "parking lot" to be revisited.
2. **Old Business:**
 - a. C. Babcock reiterated the January 4th election of officers – Chair Christian Babcock, Vice Chair Richard Smith, Secretary Janice Vance.
 - b. C. Babcock advised that the Commission's regular meeting schedule will be the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays of the month. This schedule was amended via email from what was proposed during the Commission's initial meeting January 4th. All meetings will be broadcast on Spectrum TV channel 5. To adhere to State rules for Charter Commissions,

an initial Public Meeting has been scheduled for January 21st (10am-12pm) at Town Hall; with an inclement weather date of January 28th. Meeting notice has been provided via a newspaper legal notice, posting on the Town website, text notification, and fliers which were distributed for members to place at locations throughout town. It was additionally noted that both C. Babcock and M. Brown had been contacted by Tammy Wells, a reporter with the Kennebunk Post, and it is expected the paper will feature a story on the charter process. C. Babcock also spoke with Dan King of the Post to request a guest column.

- c. Approval of minutes: C. Babbidge moved to accept the meeting minutes for January 4, 2023. S. Sayers seconded. Minor changes were suggested, which C. Babbidge accepted as part of the motion. Vote: show of hands, 9 in favor, none opposed. The motion passed.

3. New Business:

- a. Ideas for soliciting comments from community members on a subject all agreed most community members are not very familiar with:
 - i. M. Brown noted that past Commissions “took the show on the road” by meeting with community organizations such as the Senior Center to get feedback. He suggested combining some of the pieces that were put together over the past week by members to provide talking points.
 - ii. C. Cluff suggested reaching out to other town committees to get on their meeting agendas to provide an overview.
 - iii. S. Bloomfield mentioned the status and function of town committees, as well as the communications flow between the Select Board and committees, as an area of concern.
 - iv. C. Babbidge noted that encouraging both verbal and written comments at public meetings was important, with creation of a means to track all comments so they can be discussed during future meetings and not simply noted. B. Robinson suggested putting together such a checklist to be used on the town website, and volunteered to work on this project.
 - v. M. Brown said it was likely the next town newsletter, which is posted to the website and placed in the Kennebunk Post, could be used.
- b. Suggested changes to the draft flier created by J. Vance:
 - i. C. Babbidge suggested using the charter’s Table of Contents, which provides a good brief overview, and proposed replacing the flier’s definition of a charter as a “town’s operating instructions” with language stating the charter is the Town’s Constitution.
 - ii. D. Smith recommended keeping copy simple, with less detail about the town’s form of government and more about the process and timeline.
 - iii. S. Bloomfield offered help with changes to the flier, as did B. Robinson.
 - iv. C. Babcock stated he had received guidance that it was permissible to collaborate on such a task via email, as it would not violate any FOAA rules.
- c. Preparation for the January 21st public meeting:
 - i. M. Brown read the public notice that appeared in the Portland Press Herald, which is brief.
 - ii. Discussion took place about using large white pages that break down the subject matter, so meeting attendees could write thoughts on sticky notes and attach them. As the process evolves, future meetings would likely be the best venue for

this. Members agreed that for this first meeting, note cards would be provided for attendees to use in submitting written comments.

- iii. It was agreed that an adequate supply of printed hand-outs, including fliers, copies of the Powerpoint deck, and a few copies of the charter, was important to have, as some people do not use computers. People may also want to jot notes on them.
- iv. It was noted that during most town public hearings/meetings, speakers stand at the podium and speak into the microphone, which allows all comments to be heard by channel 5 viewers, but many speakers are intimidated by it. Members felt it important to provide a means for residents to also provide written comments, which could be anonymous, and which the Commission could then track and deal with, as suggested by C. Babbidge, who described the process used by the State Legislature. S. Bloomfield mentioned the recent “meet the candidates for town manager” meeting which allowed attendees to speak with the candidates individually, and then drop written comments into a closed box, was empowering, and she wants attendees of our Saturday public meeting to have that same sense of access and empowerment.
- v. It was agreed that the Chair would open the public meeting with a welcome and thanks, a brief overview of the process, indicate the handouts available, and segue to a Powerpoint deck to describe the charter review process. The deck will provide a high level description of what a charter is, and why it’s time to review the current one. The meeting will then be opened to Q&A. After a short break, the meeting will be open to formal comments and open discussion.
- vi. M. Brown described Town guidance for refreshments, and confirmed that the meeting will be streamed, and that a recording secretary will be available.
- vii. In response to both T. Trainer’s and J. Vance’s questions regarding why the Commission was created, C. Cluff noted that the Select Board has discussed it off and on for several years now. M. Brown described the 2022 recall referendum for School Board Directors as elevating the need, and that there had also been discussion about whether a Town Meeting format still worked well for a town as large as Kennebunk. S. Sayers read the State’s statute aloud that pertains to recalls of elected officials and noted it is far more specific than that shown in the current Town charter. Members stated that because the recall is likely still fresh in residents’ minds, the public meeting could elicit some comments about it. T. Trainer noted that because the review process is just starting, the Commission has no positions yet, but members need to be prepared for questions from residents. C. Babbidge noted that the public meeting is designed to take comments and ask pertinent follow-up questions of commenters so that committee members have a firm understanding of what a resident is asking. The goal is that all live comments as well as written comments be recorded for committee follow-up. R. Smith felt it important that the tone of the meeting be kept informal – “neighbors talking to neighbors.”

4. Action Items:

- i. C. Babcock will create the Powerpoint deck for the January 21 public meeting.
- ii. J. Vance will take all suggestions for changes to the flier and send new drafts to the group for comments. It was agreed that it was important to have sooner rather than later.
- iii. B. Robinson will work on a checklist to ensure all subject matter is covered.

5. Adjournment:

- a. At 8:20pm, T. Trainer moved to adjourn the meeting. C. Cluff seconded the motion.
Vote: show of hands. Nine votes in favor, none opposed.

Respectfully submitted,

Janice Vance (Secretary)

Janice Vance 3/8/23