

GTF Meeting Minutes Thursday, April 27, 2023

Attendees: Ray Seigfried, John Sheflen, Lynda Kolski, Kate Threefoot and Bev Clendening

The meeting called to order by Ray at 7:33

Minutes for meeting on February 23 approved with a minor correction.

Minutes for meeting on March 22 approved with corrections.

Report of Sub-TF on Ordinances and Policies

Guidelines for Policies. These guidelines are meant encourage but not mandate written policies for the work of committee and officers. Policies are meant to provide transparency, create awareness, improve compliance, and help others who in the future will have responsibilities as Committee Chairs and Village officers. There was a discussion about which policies should require approval of Town Assembly. The statement in the guidelines regarding the types of policies that would require approval is narrow and may not capture all the cases which might need approval. It was suggested that committees should report any new policies in their report at TA meeting. It was noted that Committees tend to bring things that will impact residents broadly to TA anyway. The Ordinance and Policy sub-TF will re-work the section of the guidelines dealing with approval of Town Assembly.

Bylaws. Some items in the Bylaws, for example, details about conduction of TA meetings, are not in Charter. John suggested that the by-laws be repealed and that a policy for Town Assembly meetings be created. Ray believes that there is a section in the Charter that states that the Charter supersedes anything in place at the time the Charter was approved. This would render the Bylaws defunct. Ray will investigate this.

Ordinance #15 (draft 4_25_2023)

III. Definitions. B. Occupied:

1. This item should refer to the primary dwelling. If the primary dwelling is occupied even if an ADU is not, the residence is considered occupied.
2. This item concerns cases where there is no primary dwelling. The original ordinance states that 100% of ADUs must be occupied; the revision says at least two of the ADUs must be occupied. Suggested change: “Multiple ADUs units within the same building where the leaseholder does not reside on the property, must be 100% occupied.”

Questions were raised about instances where there is no primary dwelling, or the property is used solely for a business or as a studio. There were no clear answers to these questions.

3. For transient occupants, leases, affidavits, or proof of insurance (vacant housing insurance or transient occupant insurance) is required to prove occupancy. Questions were raised about the type of insurance that would be required. This part of the ordinance was thought to need further clarification. John will work on this.

V. Registration statement and fees; local agent.

- The revised ordinance states “In determining the period of one-year period of vacancy, one or more periods of temporary occupancy not exceeding in the aggregate 45 days shall not be counted as occupancy.” This was unclear to some TF members. The intent is to set a lower limit on the number of days a dwelling must be occupied to avoid a vacant housing fee. The 45 days do not need to be consecutive.
- Changes to waiver requirements: Leaseholder has a right to apply for a waiver rather than a right to a waiver. Also, two waivers will be allowed rather than an extension of a one-time waiver.
- There was a discussion about leaseholds that are being used solely as a business or studio. This would fall under transient occupancy.
- In the purpose section of the Ordinance, transiency is being used with a negative connotation. It was suggested that the word “transients” be dropped from this section.

Other Business

Motion to change the definition of referendum.

- Timetable for the motion to change the definition of a referendum: second reading at June TA meeting and vote in September. If TA approves the new definition, how does that affect the GTF recommendation? If the motion is approved by TA and by a referendum, this change could be presented to the State Assembly in January. Other changes to the Charter would follow soon after (we assume). It is unclear whether there was a referendum at the time of the adoption of the present Charter.
- Ray presented a Timetable for the GTF in which the GTF would finish its work before the June TA meeting and present our recommendation at that meeting. Education sessions would occur in the summer and a vote on the recommendation would occur at the September TA meeting. For presentation to TA, we would need documents showing old Charter text, suggestion changes with rationale and explanation.
- Lynda pointed out that a lot of effort should be put into education and that summer is not an ideal time to do this. There was a consensus that finishing our work by June does not seem feasible.
- Ray suggested that we make a motion at the June TA meeting to mandate that all Charter changes be presented to the State Assembly simultaneously.
- Ray suggested that registration committee be invited to the next Charter sub-TF meeting to try to convince them to hold their process until the other Charter changes are ready for referendum.
- Questions and observations:
 - Is it possible to have the referendum for budget follow different rules than other referenda? There are very few other referenda and only for very important issues such as the purchase of the Avery Property.
 - We could pass an ordinance that states that if the budget does not pass we would revert to the previous budget.

Meeting was adjourned 9:41