

### **Call to Order**

Town Clerk Mr. Simko called the meeting to order at 10:08 a.m. TGSC members and other participants met in-person in the Town Offices, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Conference Room B.

### **Participants**

The following members were present for the meeting: Town Clerk Austin Simko (ex-officio); David Floreen; and Richard Fox.

### **Discussion**

The subcommittee, as charged by the TGSC, discussed studying various topics relating to communication between Andover's government and residents.

The subcommittee reviewed the list of previously identified study topics remanded from the TGSC for consideration. The following table articulates the chosen study topics:

	<b>Communication Study Topics</b>	<b>Point - Person</b>
1	How might the Town enhance awareness of recent and forthcoming events, meetings, government issues, etc.? Who would be responsible?	NA
2	Specifically, what steps might be taken to modernize communication between the Town and residents?	NA
3	Would Andover benefit from a robust non-governmental news-gathering service/organization, and might we suggest action by other stakeholders in this regard?	NA
4	Is it the Town's role to enhance civic awareness of the residents, and if so, how would the Town go about this? Who would be responsible?	NA
5	What provisions are required so that residents are properly consulted on projects and initiatives?	NA

The subcommittee considered each topic in turn, taking into account the discussion by the TGSC at its May 24, 2021 meeting, and working from a draft report written by Dick Fox. This draft report is attached to these minutes.

The subcommittee noted that the Town's information platform is very impressive. Specifically, the Town's website and NewsFlash program provide extensive amounts of information. Unfortunately, many Andover residents don't know about the information tools.

The subcommittee endorsed the following recommendations:

1. The Town should dedicate a full-time staff person to coordinate the myriad efforts, current and new, around internal and external communication. While an additional full-time position is likely not feasible, reallocation of a current position for this purpose is important. This coordinator should report directly to the Town Manager's Office. This is necessary given the size of the Town's budget, the activity of the municipal organization, the expectations of an educated electorate, and the growing complexity of the community.
2. A bi-weekly digest or precis should be provided to residents conveying information about the administration and public bodies. This resource would provide "tagged" information sources and should be customizable per resident interests (as the NewsFlash service is). Public bodies should be required to submit information to this resource to ensure that it is not exclusively administration-focused and administration-driven.
3. Website videos of public body meetings should be "tagged" to allow residents to quickly and easily skip to portions of meetings that interest them.
4. New residents should be welcomed to Andover with information about our Town Meeting form of government.
5. A "Citizens Academy" should provide in-depth information to residents about different aspects of Andover's government and civic system.
6. Civics information should be shared with residents through inserts included in excise tax bills.
7. Enhance content provided by social media, included "tagged" videos and minutes, etc.
8. More aggressively advertise the NewsFlash service.
9. Encourage continued remote meetings for public bodies, including the means for residents to view and participate remotely.
10. Encourage other stakeholders to explore the facilitation of a non-governmental news gathering operation. This entity may be a nonprofit organization or a public benefit corporation.

These measures address the consistent feedback received by residents at the 2019/2020 Listening Sessions, the 2020/2021 public forums, and many committee meetings.

The subcommittee will present these recommendations to the TGSC at its next meeting on June 28, 2021 in hopes of including them in the full committee's ultimate report.

## **Adjournment**

Mr. Simko moved that the meeting adjourn, and Mr. Floreen seconded. The subcommittee voted by roll call (3-0) in favor and the meeting was adjourned at 11:02 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Austin Simko, Town Clerk