

The following document was submitted by Councilmember Eileen Burke for inclusion in Item 7 the May 10, 2022 Town Council meeting

RESOLUTION REGARDING ANNUAL TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Town Council members are elected to four-year terms and sit on a variety of town, JPA, and regional commissions, committees and boards (hereinafter “committees”) that impact the interests of the Town, town residents, the greater region and the state. These committees address and govern a variety of issues including, but not limited to, housing, homelessness, sustainability, energy, recycling, regional planning, disaster preparedness, transportation, police and fire protection, and hiring and firing of employees.

Positions on these various committees provide Council Members the following individual benefits, which in turn, benefit the Town, residents and the larger region:

- a) experience and knowledge;
- b) the ability to impact and prioritize short and long term policy;
- c) contacts in the greater community;
- d) a position to advocate to the benefit of the Town and town residents;
- e) control over budgetary decisions for essential services; and,
- f) working relationships with upper levels of the various county, state, regional and town organizations.

Though individual council members may have personal interests and reasons for wanting to be on a particular committee, personal reasons should be secondary to the overall benefit and interests of the Town.

The Town benefits and best serves Town interests by promoting, among all five council members, equal institutional knowledge, education and experience on the full spectrum of issues that come before the Council.

Concentration of institutional knowledge and experience in only a few council members can lead to a loss of institutional knowledge and experience, as when

one or two council members who have remained on a committee for an extended period of time retire or are voted out of office.

Concentration of committee assignments in a few Council members and/or long term assignment of a single Council member to a particular committee, to the exclusion of other Council members, can also lead to an unequal sharing of control and decisions related to Town governance and an underutilization of the talents of all five Council members.

Committee attendance is a time commitment such that it is in the interest of fairness that all council members share the responsibility of sitting on the various committees equally.

In order to promote co-equality of council members with both depth and breadth of knowledge and experience, it is in the best interest of the Town to have Council members rotate committee assignments on a periodic basis. The benefits of rotation include:

1. Professional development of Council members;
2. Allowing Council members to utilize their individual skills in a variety of positions and committees;
3. Allowing more Council members the experience and knowledge necessary to fully evaluate issues pertaining to the Town;
4. Reducing the negative impact and lost institutional knowledge created by Council change through elections and retirement;
5. Reinvigoration of Council members and committees through rotation to new assignments and expanded networks;
6. Avoidance of any possible bias in favor of or against any particular Council member or committee;
7. Allowing sitting Council members who have left an assignment to mentor Council members new to an assignment thereby reinforcing knowledge continuity; and,
8. Allowing development of working relationships between all Council members and the long-term employees and agencies serving the Town and area.

THEREFORE:

To benefit the Town by ensuring both a depth and breadth of experience among Council members,

To reward seniority on the Council, and

To provide an equal opportunity for all Council members to serve on the various committees,

The following procedure will be implemented for annual assignment to committees:

Prior to annual assignments, the seated council will determine an order of seniority based on continuous number of years in office.

If Council members were first elected in the same election or have served for the same period of time, the member with more votes in the most recent election will be designated the senior member for purposes of seniority.

In order of seniority, reversed when the 5th member has made their selection, the Council members will select the committee they wish. Committee assignments will proceed in this manner (1-5, 5-1) until all assignments are selected.

Further, unless a particular committee has a designated shorter term limit, a member may not select the same committee for more than three consecutive years UNLESS no other member wishes to serve on said committee.

Council members who are appointed and assume the committee assignments of a departing councilmember shall not have the assumed assignments count toward the three consecutive years.

Alternates to committee assignments are not limited to number of years and do not count as a selection.

This procedure will begin with the assignment of committees in 2022 and, for the purpose of determining consecutive years, will incorporate the committee assignments for 2019, 2020 and 2021.

