



## **Plympton Bylaw Review Committee**

Minutes for January 26, 2017

6:00 PM, Large Meeting Room

The meeting, having been duly posted with an agenda, was opened by Colleen Thompson at 6:05 PM. This meeting was also posted as a Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting, to allow full participation of those present. In attendance were:

Committee members: Jean Cohen, Jake Jacobson, Kimberly Russo, Ann Sobolewski, Ted Taranto, Ken Thompson and Alan Wheelock Absent: Amy Cronin

Selectmen: John Traynor and Colleen Thompson Guests: Linda Leddy and Dave Alberti

Colleen Thompson chaired this initial meeting. It was confirmed that all but one member of the committee had gone to the Clerk's office to get sworn in. That person will abstain from any vote this evening and will get sworn in prior to the next meeting.

The meeting began with each person introducing and telling a little bit about themselves. Colleen Thompson then read the proposed general purpose of this committee which had been approved at the last Board of Selectmen meeting. Later in this meeting the purpose was amended by the addition of the final sentence and now reads:

*The Purpose of the Plympton Bylaw Review Committee is to conduct a continuous review and analysis of the Town Bylaws and recommend and present to any Town Meeting such changes by amendment, addition or deletion, as it is deemed necessary and desirable. The ultimate purpose of this committee is to maintain the beautiful agricultural nature of our town while supporting property owners' rights, whether residential or business.*

We again went around the table to enable each person to have to opportunity to say what they hoped to achieve and what they perceived to be the needed changes in the bylaws. Some, but not all of the things spoken are:

- Speak to the boards, committees and departments to solicit their opinion of the bylaws within their purview that need immediate attention. Go for the top 10, initially.
- Find ways to enforce the bylaws
- Update and clarify definitions
- Tidy up the grammar, punctuation, numbering, continuity, etc.
- Add and remove items to make the bylaws relevant for modern times
- The current bylaws are deficient. The Town is limited and constrained when called upon to defend them.
- The bylaws need a more complete Table of Contents and an Index.
- There are many free resources available to help with this effort.

- The bylaws are important to help the Town maintain its identity and set a vision for the future.
- There is a need to encourage people to take care of and have pride in their property.
- The law and the world change quickly. Even recently amended bylaws need reexamination and updating
- The Town needs clearer, updated bylaws to avoid litigation and support the Town's position when litigation happens

John informed the committee that the MA Department of Revenue (DOR), Division of Local Services (DLS), Technical Assistance Bureau (TAB) has a presentation to offer on bylaw review. TAB Chief Zack Blake is willing to come to a meeting to offer general guidance. John will contact Zack to confirm Wednesday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> as the date of this meeting.

Discussion moved to the form the committee would take. It was suggested that the committee break into two smaller committees, one for zoning bylaws and one for municipal bylaws. Questions were raised about how to best do this while still meeting the requirements of Open Meeting Law. Selectpersons John Traynor and Colleen Thompson voted to authorize Colleen to seek the advice of Town Counsel (see also BOS minutes from this night).

Linda Leddy and Dave Alberti agreed to join this committee. They will be officially appointed at the next BOS meeting and will get sworn in. They participated as guests this evening and were given assignments but did not participate in any votes. It is the intention of Colleen and John to continue attending meetings but not join the committee.

Individuals were assigned the task of talking with the various boards, committees and departments as noted in the first bullet above. The assignments are as follows.

Dave Alberti – Zoning	Ann Sobolewski – Planning/Town Clerk/ Historical
Amy Cronin – Accountant, Treasurer, Assessors, FinCom	Ted Taranto – Open Space
Jean Cohen – Planning/Town Clerk	Ken Thompson – Board of Health
Jake Jacobson – Building	Alan Wheelock – Wage and Personnel
Linda Leddy – Conservation	

Kimberly Russo – Agricultural

Colleen moved to elect Amy Cronin as Clerk of the committee. The motion was seconded and voted 6/0/1. This may be a temporary election as the form of the committee may change, depending on Town Counsel's advice. At this point, no Chair was elected.

Next Meeting: Thursday 2/16/17 at 6:00 PM, tentatively Wednesday 2/22/17 at TBD

Colleen moved to adjourn the meeting at 7:50 PM. The motion was seconded and voted 6/0/1.  
Minutes submitted by Colleen Thompson.