

**Town of Darien  
Representative Town Meeting  
Rules Committee  
Regular Meeting  
Monday February 8, 2010**

**Attendance:**

**Present:** Karen Armour, Liz Bacon, Marc Thorne, Anita Rycenga, Gary Swenson, John Price, Seth Morton, Dennis Maroney, Mary Guimond, Mark Adiletta, Flora Smith

**Absent:** Joanne Hennessy, Maria Cleary

**Audience:** Jack Whitehead, John VanderKieft, Murry Stegelmann, Martha Banks, Frank Kemp, Diana Nizolek

**Call to Order:** Ms. Armour called the meeting to order at 8:01 PM

**Approval of Minutes of the Meeting of January 4, 2010:** A change was requested to show that T.G.S.& A. be assigned Secondary to the Tax Abatement for Affordable Housing Ordinance rather than Public Health and Safety. The change was adopted unanimously. Minutes were then approved without objection.

**Reports from the Moderator**

Ms Armour noted that a cell phone tower lease would be added to the March 15 agenda of the RTM. She also noted that she wanted the Future Agenda Items Spreadsheet for the next meeting of the Rules Committee. Mr. Morton is working on it.

**Tax Abatement Ordinance**

Ms Armour noted that Tax Abatement item is on the Board of Selectmen's Agenda for reaffirmation and that there is a need for Q&A issues to be raised to broaden understanding of the issues.

Discussion ensued about the tax abatement Ordinance: Among the items discussed were:

- That the role of the Board of Finance should be only advisory
- Concern about whether Board of Finance veto power would block the item from coming before the RTM
- There is a need to lay out the pathways to granting abatement

Ms Smith noted she was not sure the ordinance was ready to come before the RTM at the last meeting:

Mr. Whitehead noted that TGS&A is not ready to report out on this item

Mr. VanderKieft noted that PZ&H felt there was a need to delay action to allow more time for study

Ms Armour noted that at the last RTM meeting there was frustration that there were no reports from subcommittees. She stated a need for executive summaries to clearly lay out pros and cons.

Ms Guimond noted that the Rules Committee voted to put the item on the RTM Agenda to get the debate out on the table.

Ms Rycenga felt that having the item on the agenda provided a way to get the pros and cons out for debate. She felt it would be a good idea to have a presentation made before the RTM such as PowerPoint to preview the components of the ordinance. She felt there was a lot of misinformation circulating out there which ended up frustrating the body of the RTM resulting in the delay to vote.

Mr. Swenson noted that the abatement issue was time sensitive because of the submission timing of the Darien Housing Authority.

Ms Bacon noted There is a need to have entities bringing items to the RTM take responsibility for presenting the case. In the case of the Tax Abatement she felt it is the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen to present the case.

Mr. Morton suggested that the Rules Committee assign a responsible entity for presenting the case for complex items to the RTM

**Holmes Boilers**

Ms Armour noted that an item will be on the March 15 RTM Agenda to replace 2 boilers at Holmes School at a cost of about \$410,000. Mr. Stegelmann noted that the item will be on the Board of Finance Agenda for February 23, 2010.

### **Report on TGS&A Activity**

Ms Armour introduced Mr. Whitehead to report on TGS&A activities. Mr. Whitehead said the TGS&A Committee was divided into 5 subcommittees with the following responsibilities:

- Fee Schedules
- Health Code
- Ethics
- Tax Abatement
- Open Space

It was noted that his Committee should be prepared to report on the Tax Abatement issue at the March 15 RTM Meeting.

A Discussion ensued about the availability of Darien Code Books and the fact that they are no longer provided to RTM members.

### **Committee Assignments:**

Ms Armour then introduced the topic of Committee assignments for the March 15 meeting

Mr. Maroney moved that the special appropriation [approx. \$410,000] for Holmes boiler should be assigned to the Education Committee-Primary, Finance and Budget Committee-Secondary. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Mr. Maroney moved the following order for the March 15 Agenda.

- Board of Education Special Appropriation
- Cell Tower Lease
- Code of Ordinance Fees
- Tax Abatement

The order was seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The next Rules Committee meeting is on February 22, 2010.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Seth W. Morton  
Clerk