



ORDINANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

Members

Councilor Jeremy Dubs, Chair
Councilor Garrick Perry, Vice-Chair
Dane Kuttler, Citizen
Molly Moses, Citizen
Councilor Stanley Moulton, III

MEETING MINUTES

Date: April 23, 2025, Time: 6 p.m.
Virtual Meeting

1. **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER/ROLL CALL:** At 6 p.m., Chair Councilor Jeremy Dubs called the meeting to order. On a roll call, the following members were present: Councilor Dubs; Chair, Councilor Garrick Perry, Vice Chair; Councilor Stanley W. Moulton, III, Member Dane Kuttler and Member Molly Moses. Also present were City Solicitor Alan Seewald and Administrative Assistant Laura Krutzler.
2. **ANNOUNCEMENT OF AUDIO/VIDEO RECORDING**
Councilor Perry announced that the meeting was being audio/video recorded.
3. **PUBLIC COMMENT**
There being no members of the public present, Councilor Perry moved to the next item on the agenda.
4. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
Member Kuttler moved to approve the March 31, 2025 Organizational Meeting minutes. Councilor Moulton seconded. Councilor Perry proposed the friendly amendment that the minutes be approved with correction of the spelling of Member Kuttler's last name. **The motion passed unanimously 5:0 by roll call vote.**
5. **DISCUSSION ABOUT COMMUNITY OUTREACH – GROUPS TO CONTACT, PLACES TO HOLD DISCUSSION**
Councilor Dubs referred to the list of agencies/organizations sent by Councilor Moulton as a good starting point. (See Ordinance Review Committee Outreach email, attached.) He read the list aloud.

Dane Kuttler asked if Ward 3 was the only ward with its own neighborhood association. Councilor Dubs said he's held meetings with Northampton Neighbors although it's not specific to Ward 4. Councilor Perry voiced his perception that W3NA is the most robust group. Northampton Neighbors fills in that role for others, he agreed.

Councilor Perry added Forbes Library, YMCA, Survival Center, Center for New Americans, Wildflower Alliance and Manna as additional community groups. He wondered if these would be groups they wanted to invite in or simply get information out to.

Since solid waste is a possible topic, Member Moses suggested adding Pedal People.

Forbes Library has a group that discusses disability issues, Councilor Dubs noted. As far as places to hold discussions, he suggested the Senior Center. It is definitely one of the most accessible buildings in town so she would support holding a meeting there, Member Kuttler said. Councilor Moulton mentioned Jackson Street School and the Florence Heights Community Room as other possible meeting places. He said he was thinking intentionally of places close to housing authority properties. Councilor Dubs added that the building he lives in has a community room.

Member Kuttler asked if the committee has a budget and was told it did not. She is curious as to whether they could offer food or childcare at any of these meetings, she explained.

Councilor Moulton said he thought they would have to look to the Mayor's office for funding since the City Council budget does not have much (if anything) in it for activities. Childcare in particular is one that would be well-received, he agreed.

Members Moses wondered if a requirement to provide childcare at public meetings would be something they would ever want to see in the ordinance.

The lawyer is saying, 'who's going to provide the childcare,' 'who's going to be responsible if someone is hurt,' etc., Attorney Seewald interjected. There's a lot that goes along with it. He's not saying that it's impossible, but it's something that's not as simple as they might think.

As someone who works for the agency that runs Head Start and has worked in childcare for a large part of her life, Member Kuttler commented that hosting in a school like Jackson Street would lend itself to being a good space. In terms of liability, she thinks they should talk to churches or places that offer informal childcare as part of services. She thinks they could sidestep liability issues by putting the offer out to people already employed by local childcare agencies so that they are already qualified and CORI-checked or contracting with an agency that already provides childcare.

Attorney Seewald said he thinks they would need to bid it out and contract for the service. He said he didn't know if it would spur the kind of attendance that would make it worthwhile.

Member Moses suggested the idea of supporting people monetarily instead of actually providing the service but Attorney Seewald said that would not be a public purpose for the use of funds. "That would not work."

An ordinance could say, 'if somebody demands childcare at a meeting,' so that it would be on demand or triggered by request only, Member Kuttler suggested.

Attorney Seewald said it sounds unmanageable to him. They are barely able to staff this meeting, so proposing to offer childcare would be a lot, he pointed out.

Member Moses asked whether the city is required to provide interpretation services if someone requests it and Attorney Seewald said he didn't know. Councilor Dubs said they could reach out to the ADA coordinator.

To the extent that it's required, it is required by statutes on the books, Attorney Seewald noted. It's different from childcare.

Councilor Perry noted that holding hybrid meetings to let people participate from home or having a space at one of the schools where folks could gather with their kids to access meetings might be more feasible alternatives.

Member Kuttler suggested using the meeting to prepare a draft of a communication to send out to the groups.

Members spent the next 25 minutes or so drafting the following:

Dear _____,

Did you know that it's illegal in Northampton to push a peddler's cart up Main Street...but you CAN drive a tractor down any city road? Or that any farm within Northampton city limits is permitted to raise camels for farm labor or food?

We've learned all this and more during the first meetings of the Ordinance Review Committee!

We are reaching out to people who live and work in our city to see if you are aware of any specific changes needed to our Code of Ordinances. We're looking for internal inconsistencies, outdated information and other revisions of a technical nature.

We are also interested in proposals to add or change ordinances for the sake of improving people's lives and business in the city. This includes, but is not limited to, matters of equity, accessibility, fairness and health.

The committee plans to host several in-person or hybrid public meetings to discuss topics that might lead to ordinance suggestions or changes. We'll let you know when those are scheduled! In the meantime, please forward any issues or suggestions to me, citing the section of the ordinance and desired change.

Thank you for your help with this ongoing project!

Attorney Seewald said he didn't want to be a stick in the mud but, realistically, only a small segment of the general population has ever given any thought to ordinances. "You're not going to bring out the hordes to talk about ordinances," he advised. He said he didn't want them to be disappointed if they spent a lot of time on this and didn't get a huge response.

Member Kuttler said she assumed the agenda for the next meeting would include reviewing any responses.

Members confirmed they would like the letter sent to department heads, who could be asked to share it with any committees they staff.

6. DISCUSSION ON WHO WE WANT TO BRING IN TO BE PART OF THE CONVERSATION, SUCH AS DEPARTMENT HEADS AND CITY EMPLOYEES

Covered.

7. DISCUSSION ON HISTORICAL ORDINANCES

Eventually they will need to look into ordinances that are obsolete or should no longer exist, Councilor Dubs said. It might be something they want to look into individually and bring back to the committee, he suggested.

Members wondered where they might find historical ordinances and concluded that the on-line ecode is the best source. You won't find a list of historical ordinances that used to exist, Attorney Seewald said.

In response to a question from Member Kuttler, Attorney Seewald clarified that it would be a violation of the Open Meeting Law for members to edit a google doc together outside of a public meeting. Members can forward a google doc and say it's something they'd like to discuss at the next meeting but no one can REPLY ALL. Documents can always be forwarded to fellow members for future discussion. The best way to do that is to give them to Laura.

8. DISCUSSION ON PREVIOUSLY-SUGGESTED ORDINANCES AS WELL AS NEW SUGGESTIONS

Members agreed it made sense to begin compiling a list of ordinances to discuss. The administrative assistant offered to start a list of priority topics for discussion.

Councilors Dubs said he received a text from Councilor Perry letting him know he was having technical difficulties and would be restarting his computer.

Member Moses suggested discussing whether they think a gender review of the ordinance is a priority at this time. She also mentioned noticing that solid waste and recycling regulations didn't seem to include composting at all. If there are requirements for composting for individual households, she didn't see them and wondered if any had ever been proposed.

She said she hadn't known that restaurants were required to provide take-out containers that are recyclable, compostable or reusable. She knows there are restaurants in the city that give out food in black plastic. She's been told it is not recyclable because of the way it gets sorted at the MRF. She didn't know if this was something to address by ordinance or outside of the ordinance [by enforcement].

9. DISCUSS PROCESS FOR REVIEWING ORDINANCES

Part of the process is happening right now by community outreach, Councilor Dubs noted. He expressed his understanding that the process would ultimately lead to making recommendations for changes/amendments to the code. They will be required to file a report with the City Clerk and City Council and the City Council will take it from there, Attorney Seewald said.

10. DISCUSS MEETING SCHEDULE

Members agreed to continue to hold meetings on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. They said last time that, as they kick off, every three weeks seems like a good interval between meetings, Member Kuttler reminded. "I think we're still in kick-off," she observed.

Members agreed to hold the next meeting Wednesday, May 14th @ 6 p.m. Councilor Moulton offered to help the administrative assistant find contact information for the organizations they decided to contact.

11. ADJOURN

Councilor Moulton moved to adjourn. Member Kuttler seconded. The motion passed unanimously 4:0 by roll call vote with Councilor Perry absent. The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.