



Rules Subcommittee Report

City of Newton In City Council

Wednesday, June 30, 2021

Present: Councilors Baker (Chair), Humphrey, and Krintzman

Absent: Councilor Noel

Also Present: Councilor Albright

City Staff: Nathan Giacalone, Committee Clerk

Chair's Note: *The Rules Subcommittee continued its discussion from its meeting on Tuesday, May 25, 2021.*

Chair Baker opened the discussion, saying that he had been working with Mr. Giacalone to pull all of the questions and comments offered on the Rules review process so far into a single document. He said that the goal is to create two versions: one would contain the changes that already have agreement and the other would have the changes that require more work. It would also address the undiscussed changes of greater policy impact.

The Subcommittee's discussion addressed the following points:

President Emeritus Position:

- The role of this position is to preside when the president or vice president is unavailable. This type of role is necessary, but would it be better to have a parliamentarian?
- If following retirements from the Council there is no eligible candidate for President Emeritus, a more general parliamentarian role could be a better option.
- Other cities have a parliamentarian attached to their elected bodies and Newton could benefit from this.

Docketing Process:

- The docketing process should be clarified, especially with late-filings. Usually this is non-controversial but it can be confusing at times.
- It should be clarified if items can be late-filed then put onto second-call.
- It should be clarified what defines an item going to second-call, as well as how to address an item placed on second call that should not have been.
- Other councils just docket items and add them into their queue. It should be found why Newton has items accepted onto the docket and whether this practice should continue.

- If the process is discussed of accepting items straight onto the docket, this conversation will likely relate to the discussions about who can docket an item and when items need to be discussed. Checks need to remain in place for this process.

There was consensus that there needs to be greater clarity about how the Council's process works and that a guide to the rules may be useful.

Chair Baker said that his plan for when the Rules Subcommittee reconvenes after the summer will be for it to have a two-level document of the Rules. The first level will cover the simple changes while the second will be reserved for those of a greater impact. A schedule of meetings will be worked out for the early fall to get a Report to the full Programs and Services Committee and then the Council for action well in advance of the end of the current term.

The meeting adjourned at 7:21pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

R. Lisle Baker, Chair