

PROPOSED CHANGES TO COMMITTEE GUIDELINES

As I said at our last Council meeting on October 16th, I would like to propose three changes to the Committee Guidelines. I will present each change below and give my understanding as to the reason(s) these were included originally as well as my reason(s) for the proposed change.

FIRST PROPOSED CHANGE

Page 2, Item H – Delete the first sentence that reads “Committee members must be citizens of the Town of Bethany Beach in order to be a full voting member of any committee.”

Note that page 1 under Definitions defines a Citizen as “Any person who owns property in the Town of Bethany Beach or has been a full-time resident for a minimum of 30 days.” I will use the term “non-citizen” for anyone who does not meet that definition.

When the guidelines were first developed it was recognized that “non-citizens” may well be valuable members of a specific committee due to their experience, knowledge, or background. Council realized that committees have the potential to have a significant impact on the Town concerning resources, staffing, and priorities as well as other areas. It was felt that those recommendations should only be made by the “stakeholders” (i.e. property owners) in Bethany Beach. Therefore, non-citizens should not be allowed to vote on committee issues.

I agree that there are instances where non-citizens either volunteer or are asked to serve on a town committee due to their experience, knowledge, or background. As you know, all committee chairpersons and members are approved by Council. We ask all committee members to devote their time and energy to committee business, as well as attend and participate in committee meetings. And yet today, we do not allow non-citizen members to vote. I feel that this is wrong. If we ask them to serve on a committee, we should allow them to participate fully as committee members, including the right to vote. Non-citizens should not feel that they are treated as second-class members.

SECOND PROPOSED CHANGE

Page 3, Item J – Modify the second sentence to replace the phrase “Non-resident citizens” with “Committee members “. The second sentence would then read “Committee members should be accommodated as much as possible, if such accommodation does not interfere with the workings of the Town.”

This proposed change deals with the difference between a full-time resident property owner and a non-resident property owner. Bethany Beach is somewhat unique in that we allow non-resident property owners to be elected officials as well as serve on our committees. There was concern that non-resident committee members may request accommodations that would

interfere with the workings of the town. One example of this might be that they would request that committee meetings be held on Saturday and that would incur unnecessary and additional expenses for the town.

This proposed change would delete the distinction of and reference to “non-resident citizens”. We (since I am one of those non-residents) do not appreciate being singled out in these guidelines. Whether we reside full time in town or not, we pay the same taxes and fees as resident property owners and deserve the same respect. Just as a matter of fact, non-resident property owners outnumber resident property owners by more than 5 to 1. All committee members (emphasis added) should be accommodated as much as possible.

THIRD PROPOSED CHANGE

This change is actually two changes, in order to reflect what is actually happening with Council actions. It replaces naming specific months with Council meetings.

I am not aware of any reason for keeping the current wording. However, these changes reflect what is actually happening today and allows us to maintain the current timing if the annual Organizational meeting is delayed or scheduled for a different month.

Page 2, Under Term – replace the first and second sentences with the following:

“Committee appointments expire annually, except those with multi-term limits, at the close of business on the Thursday prior to the Town Council Organizational meeting. Normally, committee chairpersons shall be appointed annually during the Town Council Organizational meeting and committee members shall be appointed annually during the next regular Town Council meeting after the Organizational meeting.”

Page 4, last paragraph – replace the word “November” with “next regular Town Council meeting after the Organizational meeting”. The first sentence will then read:

“These guidelines shall be reconfirmed annually at the next regular Town Council meeting after the Organizational meeting.”