

Memorandum

To: Board of Trustees; Selectboard; Evan Teich, Unified Manager

From: Greg Duggan, Deputy Town Manager *GSD*

Re: Approval of definitions of commonly-used words around governance and consolidation

Date: July 13, 2018

Issue

The issue is whether the Selectboard and Trustees will approve definitions of commonly-used words around governance and consolidation.

Discussion

Prior to the joint board meeting on May 14, board members were invited to submit their definitions of commonly-used words around governance and consolidation. Board members Irene Wrenner and Elaine Sopchak have met in the subsequent two months to create single definitions for each of the words.

The definitions created by Ms. Wrenner and Ms. Sopchak are attached for review.

Cost

None.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Trustees/Selectboard approve definitions of commonly-used words around governance and consolidation.

Appropriate Level of Services

The quantity / quality of public services that the residents and businesses expect, need, or want, balanced with their ability to pay for them, as affirmed by the voters approving the annual budgets.

Community

A group of people living in a particular local area or having a particular characteristic(s) in common.

Consolidation

Combining of two or more departments, committees, or service areas with a goal of efficiency and cost-effectiveness, as well as maintaining ~~or improving the quality of service delivery~~ appropriate levels of services, so that the resulting entity operates under a single point of authority, refers to one set of policies or procedures, follows the same best practices, and has a single budget for both revenues and expenses.

Culture

- 1) Beliefs, attitudes, expressions, and perceptions made by each individual and groups of individuals, which may vary greatly, as these are shaped by unique prior experiences.
- 2) An environment that allows work to get done in a timely way, safely, and by the rules, while respecting diversity, personal agency, and chain of command.

Governance

~~The persons who make up a body for the purpose of administering, who set policy and exercise authority, on behalf of the electorate.~~

1. The statute- and charter-based body(ies) of people charged with managing the municipality(ies), whose members are elected.
2. The organization of municipal management that starts with voters over the governing body, which is over the municipal manager, who is the CEO of the municipality.
3. The organization of subcommittees that manage/supervise/advise the operations of certain municipal services and provide direction to municipal staff (e.g., planning commissions, zoning boards, etc).
4. The policies set by the governing body(ies) that dictate how that body and how municipal staff do business, and interact with each other and the public.

Identity

1. Geographic areas within the municipality and their physical boundaries.
2. What these areas are called and what the entire municipality is called.

Public Input

The wide array of opportunities available for residents to communicate their expectations, opinions, and choices with elected officials and staff.

Quality of Life

The individual's perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals.

Representation

The commitment of a person or small group of people to understand the needs, hopes, and interests of a larger group of people, and to participate in the governing process by deciding upon policy and legislative questions on behalf of that larger group.

Sense of Place

Why certain places hold special meaning to particular beings. The degree to which a connection to the area is deeply felt by inhabitants and visitors.

Success

When board-identified benchmarks are achieved and validated by voters.

Sustainability

A sustainable community is one that is economically, environmentally, and socially healthy and resilient over time.

Tax Equity

All property owners pay their fair share of property taxes to support the Town of Essex's (inclusive of the Village of Essex Junction) municipal services [and have access to these services](#), regardless of where they live in the Essex community, regardless of whether they

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personally partake of some of those services, and regardless of where those services happen to be located.

Town

1. The entirety of Essex, including the Village, and all 21,000+ residents.
2. Board members should make every effort to be as specific as possible when using the term.

Transparency

The ability for people, groups, and organizations ~~outside of the government~~ to obtain complete, accurate, and timely information about the activities of the government according to law.

Trust

1. Firm reliance on the honesty, dependability, strength, or character of someone.
2. Confidence or faith of the public in their representatives' ability to govern truthfully and equitably.
3. The presumption that board members honor publicly made commitments, adhere to board policies, and not betray or deceive other board members, staff, or the public.