

LEGISLATIVE SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 5, 2023

Present: Anthony Suffriti - Chair
Anthony Russo – Vice Chair
Thomas Hendrickson
Rosemary Sandlin

Absent: Councilor Bitzas

Also Present: Councilors Calabrese, Cavallo, Mercadante, Rossi, and Smith, Mayor Sapelli, Solicitor Buoniconti, Ray Cosella

Called to Order: Meeting was called to order by Chairman Suffriti at 6:15pm in the Agawam Senior Center Seminar Hall

AGENDA

1. **Approval of Minutes dated August 7, 2023**

Motion to approve the minutes was moved by Councilor Russo and seconded by Councilor Sandlin.

The vote was 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent (Councilor Bitzas) approving the minutes.

2. **TR-2023-63 - A Resolution adopting the “Specialized Stretch Energy Code” for the Town of Agawam (Sponsored by Councilor Hendrickson)**

Councilor Hendrickson stated he filed this to add to the current Stretch Code as previously passed by the Council. State legislator recently passed an updated and specialized stretch code and this resolution would opt in. This only applies to new building and major recommendation projects. Most requires all electric pre-wiring. Two reasons why he sponsored this was to help move towards carbon neutral building and also consumer protection and consumer choice. Retro-fitting to electric costs can be excessive. Councilor Sandlin will not be supporting as it will cost a good deal of money. For instance, it could add a 3% increase if we build a new high school. Councilor Russo explained why he would be abstaining. Solicitor Buoniconti noted that the Building Inspector (who was unable to attend) was very concerned about the costs associated with this. No surrounding communities have adopted this and it would drive up our communities cost for building substantially. It would inhibit future building and new growth. Council Vice President Mercadante noted the increase in costs being passed down to the consumer. We have a green issue and a housing issue and in his opinion, they offset each other and he wouldn't be supporting this. Councilor Smith stated that with this the average building would go up by \$23,000 average. Stretch Code would be one step forward for as far as climate goes and two steps backward for what is considered affordable and he would not be supporting. Councilor Rossi stated there are so many negative things to this item. He believes this is too excessive and too aggressive. Councilor Hendrickson said a lot of these cost concerns are unfounded because there are so many incentives by state and government. Studies have shown it is cheaper to build all electric. Ray Casella, architect pointed out there are three levels of the energy code in the state. The goal of the Specialized Stretch Energy Code is to reduce us to net zero emissions by the 2050 deadline the Governor has set. Unfortunately the way the Code is written, the goal is very difficult to achieve. In a nutshell, this tries to get homes to all electric. We are already increasing our requirements for solar. He went on to provide additional comments and concerns regarding the Specialized Energy Code.

Councilor Hendrickson made a Motion to send a positive recommendation to the Full Council however there were no seconds. Motion to send a negative recommendation to the Full Council made by Councilor Sandlin and seconded by Councilor Suffriti.

The vote was 2 Yes (Councilors Suffriti and Sandlin), 1 No (Councilor Hendrickson), 1 Absent, (Councilor Bitzas), 1 Abstention (Councilor Russo) sending a *negative* recommendation.

3. TOR-2023-7 - An Ordinance to amend Section 4 of Chapter 3 of the Code of the Town of Agawam by amending the membership of the Council on Aging (Two Readings Required) (Sponsored by Mayor Sapelli)

Solicitor Buoniconti explained the reason for amending this ordinance stating that the council has difficulty obtaining a quorum so they are recuding the number of members from eleven down to seven. Senior Center Director was in attendance if anyone had any questions for him.

Motion to send a positive recommendation to the Full Council made by Councilor Sandlin and seconded by Councilor Russo.

The vote was 4 Yes, 0 No, 1 Absent.

4. Any other business that may legally come before the Committee.

None.

5. Adjournment.

Motion to adjourn was moved by Councilor Sandlin and seconded by Councilor Russo. The meeting was adjourned at 6:32pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Councilor Anthony Suffriti, Chair
Legislative Committee