

**Town of Hingham  
Naming By-Law Committee  
Meeting Minutes**

Date: January 6, 2023

Place: on Zoom

In attendance: committee members Philip Edmundson (chair), Wendy Ellison, Christine Falvey, Victor Baltera, Tom O'Reilly

absent: none

Chair Edmundson called the meeting to order at 3:05 PM.

Mr. Edmundson described feedback he had received from Tom Mayo on the proposed bylaw amendments that Mr. Edmundson had discussed with the Select Board in December. Mr. Mayo noted that the individual board members viewed the proposal favorably and wanted to move forward with the amendments. He provided Mr. Edmundson with three comments for the committee to consider:

(i) instead of allowing each board/committee with naming jurisdiction to develop its own policy, require that the Select Board prepare one policy for use by all boards/committees;

(ii) increase to 50% the threshold over which proposals for naming of Public Buildings on campus properties need Town Meeting approval and also apply the 50% threshold to the naming of areas and subareas within Public Buildings and Public Lands;

(iii) ask Town real estate counsel, Susan Murphy, to weigh in on the appropriate measurement to use for square footage, *i.e.*, usable floor area versus gross floor area or something else.

The Select Board wants to meet with Mr. Edmundson and the committee again in January.

The committee then discussed Mr. Mayo's suggestions and considered whether there are reasons for having separate policies. Although the committee generally thought one policy made sense for both efficiency and consistency, concerns were raised as to whether there were practical or political reasons not to require other committees to follow a Select Board policy. This could especially be the case for committees, such as the schools and library, that currently have their own policy or practice in place. Mr. Edmundson suggested that we seek input from other boards and committees. He noted that we can recommend a policy to the Select Board while the proposed by-law changes are pending and, at that point, seek both to get input and to socialize the idea of a single policy. Mr. O'Reilly offered to speak with the school committee and noted that there are certain state requirements that govern school committee dealings with various disfavored products (*e.g.*, cigarettes), although they do not impinge directly on naming. The committee discussed whether we should draft the policy before the date of Town Meeting. Mr. Edmundson said, in his view, it would be best to present a final proposed policy to the Select Board before Town Meeting. Mr. O'Reilly noted that the Select Board may prefer to prepare a policy only after knowing that the bylaw amendments had passed.

The committee discussed the reason for the recommended change to the 50% threshold. Mr. Edmundson thought the impetus for the suggested change was a hope that more private money would be raised if more naming opportunities were available without having to get Town Meeting approval. It was noted that, as a practical matter, leaving the threshold at 25% may help the other amendments receive Town Meeting support. Ms. Falvey observed that, by suggesting the change, the Select Board may be seeking to bring Hingham more in line with comparable towns that generally do not require town meeting approval for any naming. Mr. O'Reilly agreed with Mr. Edmundson that leaving the

threshold at 25% is less disruptive than the proposed increase. It was decided to ask the Select Board why members wanted the higher number.

The committee agreed it makes sense to ask Susan Murphy to weigh in on the floor area question.

Mr. Edmundson will schedule a meeting with the Select Board. This will be done before talking with the school committee as to its thoughts on a policy. Mr. Edmundson will also ask Tom Mayo whether he sees concerns or issues with having the Select Board establish a policy that binds other boards/committees.

Ms. Falvey will recirculate the draft policy she and Ms. Ellison previously prepared, and the committee will discuss it at our next meeting.

The minutes for the meeting held on December 1, 2022 and the minutes (as amended) for the meeting held on December 8, 2022 were approved on a roll call vote of 5 to 0.

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 PM.

Documents:

Draft minutes for meeting of 11/14/2022