

Concerns about eliminating minutes of official town meetings

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Dear Mayor Compton and Town Councilors –

I am sending this email to state my opposition to the Town Government's consideration of using recordings of Town Council meetings in lieu of official meeting minutes for the public record. A meeting recording is essentially a transcription of the meeting proceedings which is a very different thing than minutes that provide highlights of key discussion points and decisions. In addition, meeting minutes are ratified by the Town Government representatives by vote for the official record. It would place a burden on Town residents to have to sit through hours of discussion from a transcription (i.e., recording) of the Town Council meetings just to learn about key decisions. It would also create significant archival challenges, especially for those attempting to research the history of Town decision-making.

I don't know the reasoning behind the suggestion to forego meeting minutes, but if it is an attempt to circumvent the lengthy discussion of proposed changes and "corrections", as occurred at the November 8 meeting, I would suggest that process can be improved. For instance, I would recommend that Town Councilors be required to submit recommended changes in writing within a specified time frame prior to each Town meeting and that a time limit be placed on the discussion/review/approval of meeting minutes at the meetings. Wordsmithing during a Town Council meeting is a waste of the Town Councilors' time and the public's time.

I appreciate the service that each of you provides to the Town. I am confident that there are ways to use your valuable time and efforts more efficiently and productively during the Town Council meetings, while also preserving the recording of official meeting minutes for the public record.

Thank you all for your efforts on behalf of us residents, Mary

Mary Blake
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