

# Town Meeting Day Committee

Meeting notes, June 5 2024

Called meeting to order at 7:05.

Clayton Cargill, Eric Hutchins, Tom Ziobrowski, Glenn Herrin, Alice Kitchel, Alison Low, Alison Despathy.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 after a lively discussion on gardens, woodchucks, and assorted pests.

This is the last meeting. Correction to meeting notes from previous meeting – Eric was there. No other corrections noted.

We reviewed the presentation, along with our comments, with Glenn noting that commenters could continue to review their comments after the meeting. Alice wanted to know if we could share the report with individuals in Sutton, who are interested in promoting Town Meeting Day. The committee was fine with that..

Survey summary is okay to publish and distribute to those who asked to see copies. Alison L will do this.

Clayton – not in favor of making changes to current TMD format. We can address access issues, but there “isn’t significant steam to do anything else.”

Glenn reminded the group that we were including a daytime meeting for informational meetings. He also noted that S55 goes into effect in July, which requires recording meetings for public bodies.

Glenn’s comments – AB doesn’t increase turnout. State laws for town meetings are flexible, but charter changes makes everything difficult. Attendance isn’t really dropping. Mandating AB makes it easier for people to vote, but it deprives others of the right to direct participation. He introduced crazy idea to pay workers who are attending floor meeting, at an estimated cost of about \$20,000, if everyone took up the offer.

Eric – key takeaway is that we should do everything from the floor. Doing a lot of thinking about how we should think about the common good, rather than individualism. He had underestimated the opposition to TMD. We should focus on the enhancements to improve participation.

Alice – expressed concerns about SB2 in that it disconnects debate from voting by at least a month. TMD was allowed to get moldy, so the ad hoc committee made a difference. Building on face-to-face interaction is invaluable.

Alison L – agreed with Clayton that existing variations on the hybrid model offer the best opportunity to compromise on a deeply divided issue. We need to remember that AB participation is not second-class participation. For some people it’s all they have. We have no reason to believe that those who don’t attend...don’t want to. Many people simply can’t attend because of work commitment. We need to expand on information meeting attendance. And, we need to reach out more to the next potential generation of TMD-goers.

Tom – believes in electing officials by AB and floor voting on budgets, essentially another variation on a hybrid model. No perfect solution short of making TMD a paid holiday. Clayton expressed concern about having a lack of candidates for AB. Before we do anything, we need to do away with the charter, because it is preventing us from being flexible.

Clayton noted that repealing the charter is a tough sell, because we are not replacing the charter with anything.

The committee reviewed the preview of the presentation to SB

We selected first and second choice and assigned 10-point weighting to options. Refined the language on the presentation.

Aim for July 2<sup>nd</sup> (Schoolboard) and July 18<sup>th</sup> (Selectboard)

Glenn to do one more tweak on presentation to circulate.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35.

Respectfully submitted,

Alison Low