



Time	7:30 PM
Place	Acton Town Hall, 472 Main Street, Room 9
Members Present	Steve Noone, Chair; Jodi Bromberg; Pat Clifford; Ann Chang; Mark Hald; Amy Reimann; Alma Sandman; Ann Corcoran;
<sup>1</sup> Associate Member	Elizabeth Osche <sup>1</sup> ; Ray Yacouby <sup>1</sup>
Members Absent	Xuan Kong

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### 1. **Introductions**

Chair S. Noone convened the meeting at 7:30 PM. Each member took a moment to introduce themselves to the Committee.

### 2. **Review and Discuss Committee Charge from Board of Selectmen**

The charge and membership of the Committee as approved by the Board of Selectmen was reviewed. There are nine full members and two associate members. A quorum of the Committee is five members.

The Committee's first task is to propose improvements to the format of Town Meeting that could be adopted and implemented for the April 2020 Annual Town Meeting, specifically to increase attendance.

The second task is to identify matters for possible longer-term study, perhaps by a subsequent committee. For example, the Town's form of government and remote electronic voting.

### 3. **Propose and Discuss Improvement Ideas**

The Committee discussed several aspects of Town Meeting for consideration.

#### Communication

- Announce upcoming town meetings on social media, e.g. Facebook parents' page
- Live, per-vote social media posts for people to track meeting progress
- Use television (ActonTV) to advertise articles
- Use technology to demystify Town Meeting. Reinforce that it's a legislative body with real effects/consequences.
- Make Town Meeting an event to become excited about how great the town is

#### Voting

- Remote, online electronic voting
- More ways to vote remotely



### Timing and Management of Town Meeting

- Move to a Saturday
- Meetings carrying on past 10:30 PM. When to last take up new business is decided by the members currently in attendance
- Specify duration of each article (presentation, debate, vote). Cadence of the meeting
- Keep to the published schedule
- Present/discuss on one night, vote on another night
- Presenters need to be more concise
- Time limits: Presenters, amendments, questions and answers. Consequences for exceeding limitations.
- Time limits: Fix time for debate

### Warrant

- Develop a preliminary warrant
- Provide articles through a public hearing process; ask and respond to questions so the warrant is not the first view of an article
- Put more articles on Consent Calendars
- Distribute notice to check-in early when articles of unique or significant interest are present
- Order of the articles: People attending for articles of interest and leaving few committed attendees for articles with importance
- “Con” statement/summary to article for organized opposition

### Accommodations

- Child care/babysitting: High school students caring for children of Town Meeting attendees. Other sources of babysitters
- Provide a venue where parents can sit with their children, while still being present to vote
- Transportation: Operate multiple vans. Pick up attendees earlier.
- Senior population is increasing
- Shift workers (e.g. medical, food industry, manufacturing, etc.) unable to attend town meetings
- Ethnic diversity
- Newcomers to Town
- Education on what Town Meeting is in government

### Previous Recommendations

- League of Women Voters recommendations to place all budget articles on first night
- Consideration of importance of zoning articles led to recommendation of a regular fall Special Town Meeting



Gather Information

- Need for Town Meeting to be representative of the Town's population
- Survey outside of Town Meeting to reach all potential voters of the Town; target those who do not regularly attend
- Registered voter lists, Town Meeting attendance lists
- Committee invitation to public for input
- Survey at upcoming December 2019 Special Town Meeting

**4. Committee Administration**

The Committee has an electronic mail distribution group ("shell"): [tmic@actonma.gov](mailto:tmic@actonma.gov)

Open Meeting Law was briefly discussed, reminding members to use caution with respect to e-mail, to not use "reply to all" functions in e-mail software, and that e-mails to the Committee shell will be responded to by the Chair.

**A. Election / Appointment of Vice-Chair and Clerk**

It was moved, seconded and unanimously voted to elect Pat Clifford as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously voted to elect Mark Hald as Clerk of the Committee.

**B. Schedule Future Meetings**

The Committee agreed by consensus that regular meetings will be held on the first Wednesday of the month, the next meeting being October 2, 2019.

It was moved, seconded and unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:58 PM.

**Documents and Exhibits Used During this Meeting**

1. Charge of the Town Meeting Improvements Committee as approved by the Board of Selectmen, August 5, 2019
2. Citizen's Guide to Town Meetings as published by the Secretary of the Commonwealth, March 9, 2008

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mark Hald, Clerk