

Precinct 6 Town Meeting Member

7 for 3 years

1 for 1 year

Question for Town Meeting Member candidates:

The Town Meeting Members Association (TMMA) holds three information session nights prior to the beginning of Town Meeting. Attendance at these TMMA information sessions is fairly low. What do you think could be done to encourage more Town Meeting Members to attend information sessions?

Incumbents

Christian L. Boutwell

E-mail address boutwell@stanfordalumni.org

Phone number: **617-417-0965**

Community Activities:

Lexington Bedford Youth Hockey: coach 2008-present

Lexington Youth Lacrosse: coach 2008-present; Co-President 2012-2017; Board member 2012-present

Pct 6 Town Meeting Member: 2017-2020

Question

The TMMA information sessions provide valuable background information on Warrant Articles, and I consider attendance one of the bare minimum commitments that a Town Meeting Member should make when accepting the position. Ultimately, however, I'm not sure much can be done to increase attendance other than appealing to TMMs' sense of civic responsibility to be as educated on the Articles as possible. Perhaps making attendance part of the public record, as voting/attendance at Town Meeting is, but that would only serve as "encouragement" if voters accessed the attendance record and voted accordingly.

Jonathan L. Himmel

Morton G. Kahan

E-mail address: mkahan@partners.org

Phone number: 781-861-0994

Community Activities: Town Meeting member 30 years.
Center Committee, Past member
Merriam Hill Association, Past Board member
Cary Educational Fund Trustee

Question

Although the information sessions are informative, the copious written materials available before issues are discussed in Town Meeting and the active email dialogue on the TMMA list makes attendance at these sessions less imperative for many. Perhaps limiting the sessions to the most controversial or challenging issues in one session would encourage greater interest and attendance.

Bridger E. McGaw

Stephen W. McKenna II

smc.getinvolved@gmail.com
781-325-6590

Community Activities:

- Two term Town Meeting Member 2014-Present
- Diamond Mock Town Meeting Volunteer 2016-Present
- LHS Boys and Girls Cross Country/Track & Field Asst. Coach 2017-Present
- Recreation Department Elementary-Aged *Lightning Track* Coordinator 2014,2015-2018

Question

These information sessions provide a clear picture of the intricacies of the Warrant Articles at each Town Meeting session. However, our members' lives may be stretched thin due to other obligations that make it difficult to attend these sessions in addition to each night of Town Meeting. My thought is that TMMA could make them more accessible to our membership by allowing the sessions to be streamed online so those who cannot physically be in Battin Hall can stay informed. If TMMA could set up its own Facebook page then we could stream the info sessions via Facebook Live, which would make it more accessible to our membership who may struggle to find time to stay informed. There are a number of technology based platforms to be investigated for such communication, but this is an idea that I believe should be explored.

Dinesh Patel

E-mail address dgpatel1@me.com
Phone number 7818616064

Community Activities

I am citizen of this town for 46 years; three children went thru Lexington schools and incumbent member.

Issues involving schools, seniors and the rest at heart.

Participating and involved in debates , attending meetings such as MLK day , climate change , Hate crime, giving talk at senior center, Cary Library as one example but serving and helping the needs of constituents - be it schools, seniors , public health or presenting citizen article and

the rest and open and eager to represent community and constituents needs with respect and pride .

Question

How can we work together to maintain progressive, compassionate and diversity inclusive ideas, thoughts and actions for this wonderful town— a true minuteman spirit we can be proud of

New Candidates

Rina Kodendera

E-mail address rkodendera@gmail.com

Phone number 781-274-1272

Community Activities

I am the VP of Membership on the LHS PTO board. I have led the LHS PTO board nominating committee for two years and made sure that we increased the number of candidates and elected a more diverse board.

For four years, I have run sessions for parents of high schoolers to help navigate high school and the college application processes.

I have been part of the LHS Schedule Committee to help update the school schedule.

Question

Let us advertise the topics that will be discussed in the information session. We should also advertise some of the varying discussion points raised by the TMMs. This will help get people interested in hearing what people have to say and getting their voice heard in the decision that will be made.

The advertising could be done via email, published warrants, and social media. The advantage in social media is that it will start the discussion & interest on-line before the meeting, and this should increase attendance to the meetings.

We should also identify some key members of the community who can spread the word about the value of attending these meetings. Having someone, I trust, tell me about attending a meeting does much more than most other means to get me to participate in the meeting.

Jyotsna Kakullavarapu

E-mail address: jkakulla@yahoo.com

Phone number: 978-387-9461

Community Activities: Serving a 3-year term on Lexington's Council on Aging Board, as well as on the advisory group for Mental Health Task Force and

Liaison for Vision 20/20 Committee.

Question

First, I would like to outline the current process in place. Collect residents' feedback, barriers for less attendance and solicit their preferences and comments. I would invite moderator and educate on town meeting warrant and the meeting process and explore the complaints or comments. Are shorter meetings an answer? Consider cutting some time.

Pull a research survey to look at what is the neighboring towns doing for making the town meeting members to attend information sessions? Are we giving enough thought to changing the existing procedure and process to make it more interesting, more involved to attend these meetings? We need to find problem and then solution from the attendees themselves.

Innessa A. Manning

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Phone number: 202-375-1752

Community Activities:

President, Cary Memorial Library Foundation

Founding Member, Lexington Center Artwalk Committee

Lexington Goes Purple (Alzheimer's Awareness and Fundraising) Committee

Center Committee (application pending approval)

(past) Big Backyard Coordinator at Fiske Elementary School

Question

I am running for Town Meeting for the first time, so I do not have prior experience with past TMMA Information Nights, but I reviewed survey responses available on the TMMA website from 2015 and 2016 to learn more about these sessions. I can offer 4 suggestions:

- 1) Enhanced communication - Often, on any one given evening in Lexington, there are multiple competing activities and events. This demonstrates the wonderful vitality of our town, but also makes it difficult to encourage specific event turnout. In my experience with community event organization, the initial invitation should be sent out with as much advance notice as possible followed up by multiple reminders.
- 2) Experiment with different timing – Holding the sessions only on weekday evenings may be limiting attendance. TMMA should experiment with holding the sessions at different times (perhaps one evening, one weekend day, one morning or lunchtime).

3) Reduce duplication of content - The TMMA survey results included several comments about the redundancy of information provided at the information sessions versus the actual Town Meeting. Perhaps the Information Session could be used to present the issues and then the format of the actual Town Meeting could be limited to questions and discussion. Or, the format of the Information Sessions could be modified – perhaps instead of a presentation, there could be more of an “office hour” approach with the experts on specific issues making themselves available to answer questions on a drop in or rotational basis.

4) Expand audience – TMMA should consider opening the information sessions to the public at large and provide an opportunity at the end of the session for those attending to meet with their Town Meeting representatives to share their thoughts. Having the opportunity to hear from constituents may encourage more Town Meeting Members to attend, and also providing a mechanism for informing residents which of their representatives are fully engaged in understanding the issues they will be voting on.

As noted above, I am new to the Town Meeting process so do not have first-hand experience to base my suggestions on. However, sometimes an outside view can offer a valuable perspective.