



Town of Groton

173 Main Street
Groton, MA 01450
(978) 448-1100

Groton Town Meeting Review Study Committee

Town Meeting Survey

This past December, 2012, Groton's Board of Selectmen appointed a Committee to study Groton's Town Meeting and develop recommendations for making Town Meeting more interesting, efficient, and inclusive.

Our Committee will, ultimately, provide a report which outlines identified voter concerns, an analysis of how Groton compares with best practices of similar towns as to its conduct of Town Meeting and registered voter participation, and recommended courses of action for the Board of Selectmen's consideration.

Over this summer, the Committee will publicize and hold a public hearing to solicit town-wide input. In the interim, your own responses to the content of this "Town Meeting Survey" will greatly assist us in our effort of developing statistical information on resident participation in Town Meeting, identifying Town Meeting issues deemed important by Groton's registered voters, and assessing registered voter opinion on a variety of suggested improvements, to Town Meeting, brought forward, to-date.

We hope every registered voter will take the time to complete this survey and return it to the Town Clerk's Office, in person or by mail, or scan/email it to townmeetingsurvey@townofgroton.org, or, in off hours, place it in the outside drop box at the back of Groton's Town Hall, by not later than June 24th, 2013.

If there is more than one registered voter in a household, additional copies of this survey can be obtained from Groton's Town Clerk's Office at Town Hall during posted business hours, or by downloading it from <http://www.townofgroton.org/>.

Thank you, in advance, for your assistance in the Committee's research. If you have any questions, you can email townmeetingsurvey@townofgroton.org, or contact the Office of the Town Clerk at (978) 448-1100.

Very sincerely,

The Groton Town Meeting Review Study Committee



- 1) I enjoy attending Groton's Town Meetings: () True () False
- 2) I attend Groton's Town Meetings (Check one):
- () Never () Rarely () Sometimes () Most of the time () Always
- 3) Thinking about those times you haven't attended Groton Town Meeting, which statement, or statements, best reflect your reason, or reasons, for not participating (Please place a "X" next to the statement, or statements, that most apply):
- a) () I learned too late a Town Meeting had been called.
 - b) () I had family related obligations.
 - c) () I had business/work related obligations.
 - d) () I had no opinion of, or no interest in, Articles in the Warrant.
 - e) () I felt debating on Warrant Articles would be too time-consuming.
 - f) () I felt voting on Warrant Articles would be too time-consuming.
 - g) () I preferred my own votes on Warrant Articles be kept confidential.
 - h) () My Spouse and I always voted the same, so only one had to attend.
 - i) () I'm disabled, housebound, or have a condition that prevents my attendance.
 - j) () I just don't understand how Groton's Town Meeting works.
 - k) () I lacked the transportation needed to take me to Town Meeting.
 - l) () I felt my own opinion/vote would have little or no significance in the Town's affairs.
 - m) () My Spouse's vote always canceled out my own, so why attend?
 - n) () I trusted those attending Town Meeting to run the Town's affairs.
 - o) () I was uncomfortable with speaking in public.
 - p) () I was uncomfortable with being on television.
 - q) () I felt those attending would have made up their minds before hand, so my opinion/vote on Warrant Articles wouldn't have mattered.
 - r) () I am not a registered voter.
 - s) () Other (Please feel free to share your "Other" reason(s), if any, at the end of the Survey).
- 4) Examining your personal attitude(s) towards Groton's existing Open Town Meeting format, to what extent would you agree, or disagree, with each of the following statements (Enter "1" for Strongly Agree, "2" for Agree, "3" for Neutral, "4" for Disagree, "5" for Strongly Disagree, or "6" for No Opinion):
- a) () Town Meeting provides me an opportunity to meet and network with friends and neighbors.
 - b) () Town Meeting provides me an opportunity to debate and vote on Warrant Articles considered important.



- c) () Town Meeting provides me an opportunity to see how others vote on Warrant Articles.
 - d) () Town Meeting provides me an opportunity to debate and vote on Articles important to the town, even if I have no personal opinion.
 - e) () Town Meeting provides me an opportunity to do my civic duty.
 - f) () Often I leave before Town Meeting is adjourned because it goes on too long.
 - g) () I find it frustrating Town Meeting often requires more than one session to complete.
 - h) () I'm only interested in attending Town Meeting if an Warrant Article impacts me and/or my family.
 - i) () I think I would prefer to elect a representative to become an expert in Groton's town affairs and attend Town Meeting in my place.
 - j) () Groton would be well served by keeping its existing Open Town Meeting form of town government.
 - k) () Residents should be provided an opportunity to take a "Introductory" course on how Groton's Town Meeting is run.
 - l) () A weeknight is the appropriate time to hold Town Meeting.
 - m) () A Saturday is the appropriate time to hold Town Meeting.
 - n) () Town Meeting provides me an opportunity to ask questions and debate issues affecting town governance.
 - o) () Everyone has ample opportunity to voice their opinion during Town Meeting.
 - p) () I always find Town Meeting to be too slow and boring.
- 5) Please give us your opinion of each of the following statements when it is prefaced with the phrase: "*Groton's Town Meeting would be improved by...*" (Enter "1" for Strongly Agree, "2" for Agree, "3" for Neutral, "4" for Disagree, "5" for Strongly Disagree, or "6" for No Opinion):
- a) () ...dividing Town Meeting into two (2) separate sessions; the first session for discussion and debate of Articles; and the second session for voting on Articles.
 - b) () ...exploring the technology and legal means that would permit the disabled, or homebound residents, and those with eldercare or childcare responsibilities to vote in a Town Meeting from home.
 - c) () ...including the results of all required board, committee or commission votes on each Warrant Article at the time the Warrant is sent to each household.
 - d) () ...allowing individuals to vote in Town Meeting from their residence.
 - e) () ...structuring all monetary Warrant Articles in descending order with largest monetary Article first.
 - f) () ...sending all monetary Warrant Articles, requiring bonding, to a town-wide ballot for an override debt exclusion vote,



- g) () ...providing residents with a training course in Groton's Town Meeting process.
- h) () ...including, with each monetary Warrant Article, that Article's cost per \$100K of a voter's real estate tax bill.
- i) () ...providing disabled residents with improved access to, and placement in, Groton's Town Meeting facility.
- j) () ...providing on-site childcare for children of Town Meeting attendees.
- k) () ...holding Town Meeting on consecutive evenings, only.
- l) () ...waiving formal reading of each Warrant Article, thereby allowing the Moderator to immediately open that Article to debate.
- m) () ...allowing Groton residents to use electronic technology, for voting within the four walls of Town Meeting.
- n) () ...allowing "Absentee" voting on un-amended Warrant Articles.
- o) () ...identifying, in advance, which Warrant Articles are "Advisory, only" vs. "Binding upon Groton's Board of Selectmen".
- p) () ...holding Town Meeting on weekends.
- q) () ...Other (Please feel free to share your "Other" idea(s), if any, at the end of the Survey).

6) Would you like a Groton Town Meeting Review Study Committee Member to contact you (Underline one)? (Yes, please) (No, thank you)

If you answered "Yes", to Question "6", please enter your contact information:

7) Please specify your gender: Male Female

8) Please specify your age: _____

9) Please specify which Groton Precinct you vote in (Please circle one):

- (1) (2) (3) (Not sure) (I don't vote)

Other ideas or comments you may wish to share, if any:

Thank you for your participation!

