



Important Information for Town Meeting Members Regarding Needham's Outdoor Annual Town Meeting

From the Moderator: Michael K. Fee

Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, Needham's 2020 Annual Town Meeting will be held outdoors at the Memorial Park Parking Lot on June 8. The meeting will begin promptly at 5:00 p.m. and the length of the session will be limited by available sunlight. Accordingly, with fair weather, the session may be able to run until approximately 8:00 p.m.

For months, a working group consisting of the Moderator, Members of the Select Board, the Town Manager and various Town Employees have worked on arranging an environment that will permit Annual Town Meeting to be held safely, while at the same time ensuring that Town Meeting Members may participate meaningfully. Extraordinary times require extraordinary measures. I believe the final plan achieves those goals, but as always, Town Meeting Members are *the* crucial component of an effective Town Meeting. For that reason, in conjunction with the invaluable assistance of the Select Board and Town Manager, I offer the following information for Members. Please review this information carefully and feel free to bring a copy with you on June 8. I realize there is a lot of information in this memorandum, but please understand that our goal is to make sure you are fully informed. The success of our outdoor Annual Town Meeting depends on you. I ask for your patience, consideration and understanding.

Finally, after you review this information, I ask that you help us with our final preparations by taking a brief survey to indicate whether you will attend our Town Meeting. The survey may be found here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NeedhamTownMeeting>

Important Information for Town Meeting Members Needham's 2020 (Outdoor) Annual Town Meeting

Safety Precautions

Your safety, and the safety of all in attendance, are of paramount concern. Before going to Town Meeting, members should check their temperatures. If a Member has a temperature of 100.4 or higher or is experiencing any other symptoms of COVID-19, the Member should remain at home.

Members are required to wear face coverings at all times when in attendance at Town Meeting. The Town will have paper masks for those who forget or do not have a covering. The Town will not have hand sanitizer, so Members may choose to bring their own. In addition, given the outdoor nature of the event, Members are encouraged to bring bug spray, sunscreen and water for drinking. Because it will be held in the evening hours, please do not forget to bring a jacket or other warm clothing.

Getting to Town Meeting

Town Meeting members may use the following parking lots to park during the Meeting: Needham High School Parking Lot, the Upper Lot of the Rosemary Recreation Complex on Rosemary Street, the Needham Free Public Library parking lots, and on-street parking on Highland Avenue. Limited spaces for Handicap Parking will be available along Rosemary Street.

Please arrive early! We need to start promptly at 5:00 p.m. To enter Town Meeting, Members must enter only through marked entrances corresponding to their Precinct. A map indicating entrance locations will be posted on the Town Meeting website prior to Town Meeting. For your information, the entrances are:

Precincts A&B – Entrance 1

Precincts C&D – Entrance 2

Precincts E&F - Entrance 3

Precincts G&H – Entrance 4

Precincts I&J – Entrance 5

Members are asked to immediately take a seat and avoid congregating in groups. Seats will be placed nine feet apart from one another to facilitate more than adequate social distancing. Please do not attempt to move or rearrange the seating.

Restrooms will be available in Memorial Field House but use will be limited to one person at a time.

The Warrant, Warrant Articles, Presentations

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Clearly, this year's Annual Town Meeting is being held in an unprecedented manner given COVID-19. The Town is taking precautions to host this critically important event in as safe a way as possible. Regrettably, there will be Town Meeting Members who are unable to participate because they are physically unable to attend or have otherwise been advised not to. We all understand this reality. Nevertheless, continued operation of the Town requires that the meeting be held in the coming weeks. Our hope is that those Members who are able, will participate in this historic event and provide the governance Needham requires.

The number of Articles contained in the Annual Town Meeting Warrant has been significantly reduced to facilitate a safer and more efficient meeting. A list of the articles, including those that have been withdrawn, can be found on the 2020 Town Meeting website (<http://needhamma.gov/4902/2020-Annual-Town-Meeting>)

Unlike in previous years, hardcopies of materials will not be available at the meeting. Members are encouraged to read the articles and accompanying information on the website. In addition, presentations for the articles for consideration will be available via video on the Town's YouTube page (<https://www.youtube.com/user/TownofNeedhamMA/playlists>). Please view these presentations in advance of June 8 because there will be no video presentations at the meeting. For those articles that will need to be addressed after the Consent Calendar, I will call each article and proceed immediately to open discussion. **We will not have the traditional presentations by proponents and the Finance Committee. Instead, we will rely on the advance video presentations. Please review them prior to our meeting.**

To facilitate a more efficient meeting, the Town has created a dedicated email address where Members and the public may submit questions to the proponents or the Finance Committee in advance. Questions will be answered on the Town Meeting website in advance of the meeting. Questions can be emailed to townmeeting@needhamma.gov.

Participating in Town Meeting

To facilitate Member participation, multiple hanging microphones will be placed around the seating areas. Members are asked to use the closest microphone if they wish to speak. Members should not touch the microphones and should remain at a distance from the microphone as delineated by the marking around the stand.

If a member cannot walk to or stand at a microphone, they should contact the Town Manager's office in advance for an accommodation. Please contact TownMeeting@needhamma.gov or call 781-455-7500 extension 0.

Once again, no presentations will be delivered at Town Meeting. While questions from Members will of course be permitted as always, you are encouraged to submit questions ahead of time. These measures are not intended to infringe our your rights and duties as a Town Meeting Member; they are intended to help us reduce the amount of time Members are gathered together and help protect the public health.

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Departing Town Meeting

Town Meeting Members are asked to depart the meeting through the same entrances at which they then entered. Please do not gather in groups and please maintain appropriate physical distancing from others, which everyone knows by now is approximately six feet. Face coverings should not be removed until members have departed and are out of the area.

The rain date for Town Meeting will be 5:00 p.m. on Wednesday, June 10 or Thursday, June 11. Notice of cancellation due to rain will be posted on the Town's Website by 12:00 p.m. on the day of the Town Meeting.

Conclusion

I realize this is a lot of information, but all of it is vital. Together, we will do this and make our predecessors very proud. I am confident that with your cooperation, we will one day look back at the Annual Town Meeting of 2020 and realize we participated in something very special and upheld the tradition of citizen governance in Needham that we all hold so dear.

Thank you.