

## ARTICLE 34:

ARTICLE 34: To see if the Town will vote to amend section 7-6-1 of the Town Charter to read as follows: At least once every five years, a special committee shall be appointed by the Moderator to review this Charter and submit a report, with recommendations, to the Citizens of Plymouth and Representative Town Meeting concerning any proposed amendments which the committee may determine to be necessary or desirable. Said report shall be published in the local paper of record and on the Town's website within 14 days of completion, or take any action relative thereto.

BY PETITION: Steven Striar et al.

### **RECOMMENDATION: Not Approve (4-8-1).**

The Advisory & Finance Committee recommends Town Meeting not approve Article 34. This article seeks to amend the Charter to require the publication of the report of all future Charter Review Committees in both the local newspaper and on the Town website. While the majority of committee members agreed that making the report of each Charter Review Committee readily available to the public was a good idea, there were differences of opinion on how that requirement should be established (bylaw versus charter) and the methods and logistics of creating ready public access to the report. In the end, several members voted against this article because of the belief that it belongs in a bylaw and not the charter while others voted against it because they believed the language and logistics needed work before they could recommend approval of the proposal. Several members observed that since the next Charter Review Committee was some years off that there is plenty of time to refine the language and seek approval at a future Town Meeting.

## Article 34

The purpose of this warrant article is to amend chapter 7 section 6-1 of the Town Charter. The existing language reads:

At least once every 5 years, a special committee shall be appointed by the town moderator to review this charter and to make a report, with recommendations, to the representative town meeting concerning any proposed amendments which the committee may determine to be necessary or desirable.

As proposed, the amended section would read:

At least once every 5 years, a special committee shall be appointed by the Moderator to review this charter and submit a report, with recommendations, to the Citizens of Plymouth and representative town meeting concerning any proposed amendments which the committee may determine to be necessary or desirable. Said report shall be published in the local paper of record and on the Towns website within 14 days of completion.

However, it is my intent to revise this article either before town meeting if possible or as an amendment on town meeting floor to remove the requirement of publication in the local paper of record.

My reason for proposing this Charter amendment is simple. It comes from the the first words of the Charter itself.

“We, the people of the Town of Plymouth,.....”

The language of the preamble is clear. I believe it is the cornerstone of the document. This is The Peoples Charter and it should be treated as such. It may seem a small thing. And on it's own mean little but 'We the People', as noted in the preamble need to be reminded of our responsibilities with respect to the conduct of our government and we should not give them up freely.

In addition, I am hopeful the publication requirement will provide the public with improved and timely access to the same important information that is provided to their representatives at Town Meeting.