

Precinct 3 Caucus

March 23, 2023

11 Lincoln Street

In attendance were William Keohan, Constance Melahoures, Ann Pizer, Laurence Pizer, Michael Babini, Gerald Sirrico, and Chair Dale Webber from the Precinct 3 Caucus. Also attending were John Mahoney, Brian Dunn, Steve Keith, Virginia Davis, and Silvio Genao.

Chair Webber called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM. He announced that Mr. Sirrico would be late because he was at the Caucus of Precinct 8 to explain Article 12 of the Special Town Meeting. He also stated that Ms. Curtin was unable to attend because of professional obligations.

The meeting began with consideration of Articles of the Special Town Meeting. After a consideration of Article 2, Mr. Mahoney presented Article 11, a change in the Meals Tax. He gave a history of the local meals tax, and he said that Article 11 would provide flexibility for the Town. Mr. Babini was concerned that money to pay bonds for Town Hall might be diverted to other uses. Mr. Keohan said, expanding the use of the Meal tax before fulfilling its original purpose (paying off the borrowing for the New Town Hall) could lead to a redirect of the Meal tax revenue to other building-related activities. There was no language in the Article that safeguarded the original intent of the adoption of the Meal tax from this possible redirect.

The caucus commended continuing conversation with the Finance Director.

There was mention of Article 3. For Article 4, there was some discussion of codification and the Bartlett Road bridge.

After mentioning Articles 5 and 6, Article 8 came up concerning gifts of land. Mr. Babini mentioned the importance of environmental studies. Mr. Keohan said that he did not support Article 8, because there was no evidence that the current way Town Meeting votes to accept gifts of land has created any lost opportunities and reducing that decision from 162 Town Meeting Members to 5 members of the Select Board would not increase public input, oversight, or transparency. Mr. Pizer urged a no vote.

Article 9 contained a new sum of \$75,000 instead of \$50,000 in the motion.

After mention of Article 10, the caucus praised Article 12. Chair Webber noted the recent support of the Downtown-Waterfront Steering Committee and the Planning Board. That completed consideration of Special Town Meeting articles.

For the Annual Town Meeting, the caucus noted Articles 2 through 6.

For Article 7A, the caucus explained the plan to add to Salary Reserve sums for the library and the schools to protect positions. The caucus urged that the Library return Sunday hours.

Silvio Genao discussed Articles 10 and 11. Mr. Pizer asked if proposed improvements to Earned Time and Long Term Illness Accounts would be presented to Office and Professional Employees International Union employees as well, Mr. Genao said yes. There was discussion about control of personnel policy.

Mr. Webber inquired about the discipline process to which Mr. Genao stated that discipline should be aimed at improvement of employees rather than punishment. In answer to the question about who would protect against Town Manager overreach, Mr. Genao pointed to the Select Board.

In a return to discussion about Article 7A, Mr. Dunn explained the close vote of Subcommittee D by saying that new information had satisfied him.

The caucus dealt with the rest of the Articles with no questions.

The caucus also considered the School budget.

The Chair proposed to waive the monthly meeting for April.

Mr. Keohan noted challenges in finding out about Downtown-Waterfront changes. He mentioned hearings concerning the Blue Anchor Motel on Lincoln Street.

Mr. Pizer moved to adjourn. Mr. Babini seconded the motion. The motion PASSED at 8:43 PM.