
Peaks Island Town Meeting

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TOWN MEETING GUIDELINES

I. INTRODUCTION:

In developing specific proposals for the Town Meeting, we are guided by the following principles:

A. The purpose of a Town Meeting is to serve as a forum for the free discussion and resolution of issues facing Peaks Island.

B. All Island residents should be actively encouraged to participate in the meetings.

C. Diversity on the Island is one of the nicest things about it. Here we have young families living side by side with retired people; teenagers with adults; widowers with widows; working people with professionals; life-long residents with new comers; summer people with year-round people; welfare recipients with wealthy people. This diversity can be either a source of hostility and tension, or a source of creativity and energy depending on our sensitivity, receptiveness to ideas, and willingness to work together.

D. The Island already contains many hard-working and dedicated groups which are supported by people who are capable and committed. The Town Meeting is not a rival to these groups. Indeed, we seek the involvement of the energies and talents of these groups to carry out the work of the Town Meeting whenever possible. The Island does not suffer from a lack of organizations, but from a lack of unity among individuals.

E. Communication and understanding between the diverse elements on the Island are as important as actually recognizing and solving problems. It is important first to develop a sense of unity and community.

F. Peaks Island is a part of a city whose government is making decisions for us. We want to know about, and have in-put into those decisions.

G. As an island, we have special needs. These needs must be communicated to those individuals, groups and organizations that have impact on us.

H. We encourage the formation of special task forces whenever practical to work on specific issues. This allows the use of the energies and talents of people whose skill and expertise lie in a particular area. These same people might be unwilling or unable to serve on a general purpose committee. Task forces should be temporary, existing to perform a specific function, and open to all people on a volunteer basis.

Although open discussion and free exchange are fundamental to the Town Meeting, it is still important to have guidelines to facilitate our working together.

In keeping with the above principles, we propose the following guidelines.
TOWN MEETING GUIDELINES

PREAMBLE

IN ORDER TO ENHANCE THE SPIRIT
OF COMMUNITY AND UNITY OF PEAKS
ISLAND, AND PROVIDE AN INSTRUMENT
FOR COMMUNICATING OUR CONCERNS,

WE, THE PEOPLE OF PEAKS ISLAND,
(SUMMER AND WINTER, YOUTH AND ADULTS,
FROM EVERY PART OF THE ISLAND,)

CONSENT TO HAVE A TOWN MEETING--,
TO SHARE OUR IDEAS, DISCUSS THEM OPENLY,
FORM RESOLUTIONS, AND CHARGE ON-GOING
ORGANIZATIONS, ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AND
SPECIAL TASK FORCES TO CARRY OUT OUR
OBJECTIVES WITH DIRECTNESS AND OPENNESS.

II. TOWN MEETING:

A. Purpose:

   To share information, ideas, concerns, and to take action on the
   same as needed.

B. Leadership:

   1. Moderator - to serve for one year from time of election.
      Role - to "chair" the Town Meeting--assuring people have a
      chance to speak; making sure various sides of an issue are
      represented, calling for questions and votes as needed,
      abiding by agenda and time constraints.

   2. Clerk - to serve for one year from time of election.
      Role - to record for the Town Meeting, and the Town Meeting
      Committee, and to correspond as directed by the Town Meeting
      or Town Meeting Committee.

   3. Election Process - see Town Meeting Committee election process.

C. Participants:

   All Island citizens.

D. Meetings:

   1. Regular - Second Sunday of March and July

   2. Special - As called by the Town Meeting Committee or by
      written petition to the clerk of twenty-five island citizens.
      There must be at least ten days posted (notices posted at the
      three island grocery stores, senior citizens' window, and the
      in-town and island bulletin boards, etc.) notice prior any
      Town Meeting (when feasible).
E. Quorum:

A quorum of fifty (50) Islanders must be present to decide on formal action. Fewer than fifty (50) Islanders may exchange information or opinions and plan for calling a quorum at another meeting.

Rationale: "This avoids trivializing the Town Meeting and insures broad-based support for any actions decided on."

F. Agenda:

1. Pre-set agenda items may include any item, issue or problem proposed by the Town Meeting Committee and or individual citizens or groups.

2. Agenda items may be proposed either at an open Town Meeting Committee meeting or submitted in writing to the Town Meeting Committee.

3. Pre-set agenda items must be presented to the Town Meeting Committee at least four weeks prior to any regular Town Meeting, and two weeks prior to any Special Town Meeting (when feasible).

   Rationale: "This facilitates publication."

4. Town Meeting Committee is responsible for organizing, prioritizing, and publicizing the "pre-set" agenda.

5. A simple majority vote may change "the order of the agenda."

6. A simple majority vote of those attending and voting may add to the "pre-set" agenda at the time of the Town Meeting.

G. Order of Business:

1. Election of the Town Meeting Committee, Moderator, and Clerk. (See election process)

2. Changes in the order of business and/or addition to agenda. Establishing of guidelines and allotment of time for the meeting. A time limit for discussion should be set by those present according to the importance of each topic. A topic such as erecting a stop sign on Island Avenue may require fifteen minutes, while a topic such as whether the State should take over Casco Bay Lines might take three hours.

3. Agenda

4. Open Discussion
III. TOWN MEETING COMMITTEE:

A. Purpose:

To carry out and/or co-ordinate the carrying out of the work of the Town Meeting. To keep abreast of issues on and off the Island that will, or do, affect island life.

B. Responsibilities:

1. To carry out the business of the Town Meeting as voted only. This implies that the Town Meeting Committee may be charged to carry out the work themselves, or to work in liaison with special task forces and/or on-going organizations charged with a specific task by the Town Meeting.

2. To communicate with the City Council and other public and private groups and individuals involved in issues or actions that affect island life. To convey the opinions of Islanders as voted at a Town Meeting and to gain information which should be relayed back to Islanders.

3. To call special Town Meetings as needed.

4. To organize and publicize regular and special Town Meetings, and actively encourage participation of all island residents. In addition to posting notices, the Committee may establish a telephone tree, appear before island organizations, announce meetings on commuter boats, and take other creative action to maximize participation.

5. To co-ordinate the design of regular and special Town Meeting agendas. (See Town Meeting Agenda.)

6. To hold open monthly meetings.

7. To assist individuals or groups in contacting appropriate resources to work on issues that do not impact the island as a whole.

C. Composition of Town Meeting Committee:

Composed of seven (7) members plus the clerk.

D. Leadership:

A co-ordinator will be elected by the Town Meeting Committee. The co-ordinator is charged to facilitate the work of the Town Meeting Committee.

E. Task Forces:

The task forces should be temporary only. They should exist long enough to perform the function, and see to it that policy is carried out. Task Forces should be open to all people on a volunteer basis.
IV. THE ELECTION PROCESS

A. The election of the moderator, the clerk, and the Town Meeting Committee will take place at the regular July Town Meeting.

B. Each (moderator, clerk, and Town Meeting Committee) will be elected for a one year term.

C. Interested candidates declare at the Town Meeting for the position they desire. In unusual circumstances, when a candidate is unable to attend the Town Meeting, his/her name may be submitted by written proxy. Any person may be a candidate. The individual must be available and committed to work year round. This means attending open monthly Town Meeting Committee meetings regularly and special Town Meetings as well as fulfilling the responsibilities of the Town Meeting Committee.

D. The vote is by secret ballot at the regular July Town Meeting, and the results are announced before the end of the meeting.

E. Any position left unfilled for any reason may be filled by the Town Meeting Committee until the next regular Town Meeting.

V. AMENDMENTS TO THE TOWN MEETING GUIDELINES:

Amendments are to be proposed at a regular Town Meeting by submitting a written petition signed by twenty-five (25) Island citizens, publicized two weeks before the regular Town Meeting is to take place; amendments are then adopted by a two-thirds (2/3rds) vote of those attending, provided there is a quorum present.

Each person, summer and winter, youth and adult, is seriously asked to make suggestions, comments, or additions to this draft of Town Meeting Guidelines. Please forward your information to:

Mrs. Jill Tiffany, Clerk
Town Meeting
Peaks Island, Maine 04108

Please return your comments on the Guidelines no later than September 1, 1978.