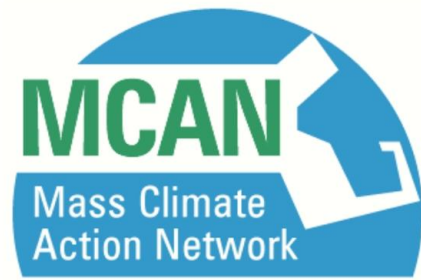


# Writing and Passing a Warrant Article in Town Meeting



**What it is, how to do it**

8/2/2017 Webinar from MCAN and 350, with thanks to Mass Power Forward  
This webinar is part of a series from MCAN and 350 on the 100% toolkit ([bit.ly/localclean](http://bit.ly/localclean))

# MCAN and 350MA



MCAN was founded in 2000, and helps town level groups take action on climate locally. We are a network of organizations (our chapters) and advocates at the town and city level who work to make community level change and turn that into state and national level change.



350 Mass for a Better Future is a volunteer-led, campaign-focused network founded in 2012 by the climate organizing non-profit Better Future Project and local volunteer activists after many years of collaboration with 350.org on actions and events.

We are partnering on this because:

- We both have the same goals
- We have complementary skills and geography
- Want folks locally to work together to WIN
- We have the tools (100% local clean energy toolkit)
- We have been closely collaborating through Mass Power Forward

# Nuts and Bolts

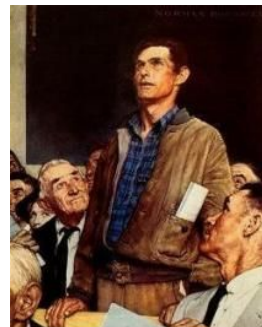
What is town meeting?

What are the types of town meeting?

When is town meeting?

What is a warrant article? What is a town bylaw vs resolution?

The explanation



# We Have Sample Language

100% resolution

Community choice aggregation warrant/resolution

Steps to meet Green Communities criteria

Complete Streets

Solar Ready Roofs, solar zoning

Net Zero planning

**Claire B. W. Miller**  
**Toxics Action Center**  
**Claire@toxicsaction.org**



**Winning the Vote at Town Meeting**

# Agenda

Principles of Winning Community Votes  
Steps to Winning a Community Vote  
Sample Plan



# Principles



1. Present the Right Question
2. ID Your Supporters and Get out the Vote  
*Don't worry about everyone*
3. Create the Feeling the whole community is voting your way
4. Demonstrate VIP Support

# Principles



5. Build Your Group Thru Your Campaign

6. Develop and Use a Compelling and Concise Message

7. Create a buzz that peaks on Election Day

8. Be Aware of the Opposition



# Get Out the Vote



## Step 1. How Many Voters Do You Need to Win?

\*Get vote list from last 4 town meetings from clerk

For example, in Grafton- the average turn out to spring town meeting is 240.

There are some “hot” issues on the warrant, so let’s round to 300.

We want to win by a landslide (2/3s) which means we need....

**200 Votes**

# Get Out the Vote



TOXICS  
ACTION  
CENTER

We know we need 200 votes.

## Step 2. Use Past Voter Lists to Identify Likely Voters

If someone has voted in the past three votes, they are very likely to vote again. Compare the voters and find your “regulars”.

In Grafton, I found 120 “regulars”.

# Get Out the Vote



TOXICS  
ACTION  
CENTER

We know we need 200 votes. We know of 120 “regulars” we should specifically target.

## Step 3. Identify Supporters

If we need 200 votes, identify more with some cushion. In Grafton they decided to collect 300 “pledges”.

Option 1: Broadcast Method: Door-knocking, phone, tabling

Option 2: Selective Identification: Listserves, Group Presentations

# Get Out the Vote



**TOXICS  
ACTION  
CENTER**

We know we need 200 votes. We know of 120 “regulars” we should specifically target. We aiming to gather 300 pledges.

## Step 4. Education and Turn-out

- a. Original Commitment \_\_\_\_\_
- b. Campaign Education: Mailer, Flyer
- c. Reminder: Phone Call, postcard, Email

# Influences on a Generic Small Town Likely Voter



TOXICS  
ACTION  
CENTER

Generic Influence	Brainstorm	Tactics to Demonstrate Support
Media	Local Paper, Cable, Radio	Editorial, Op-ed, Letters to the Editor, Media Event
Personal	(divy up regulars list)	Coffee Dates, personal phone calls
Other Groups	PTA, Garden Club, Historical Society, Senior Center,	Endorsement Letter
Elected Officials	Mayor, Board of Health	Op-Ed, Endorsement on Website
Public	People who live on Main St. Local Business Owners	Lawn Signs, Window Signs, Buttons
VIPS	Old blood, Big Business	Op-Ed, Endorsement on Website
Experts/Info	Plastic is toxic	Flyer, Speaker at an educational forum

# Sample Plan



REALMS	Week 1-2	Week 3-4	Week 5-6	Week 7-8	GOALS
Voter ID GOTV	Door to door Stop & Shop Email Groups Coffee Meetings (150 pledges)	Door to door Stop & Shop Email Groups Coffee Meetings (300 pledges)	Educational Forum  Mail fact sheet with endorsements	Mail Reminder  Call all	300 Pledges 200 Votes WIN!
Visibility		500 Lawn Signs FaceBook Meme	30 Main St. Biz with Window Sign	3 Honk-a-thons	Buzz that peaks at vote day
VIPS	Brainstorm list of 10	Recruit 5 to endorse	Put endorsement on mailer	Include on Mail Reminder	Major players with us
Media	Meet with editorial board	Have VIPs submit letters to editor	Cable TV at Educational Forum	Op-Ed from VIP	Regular coverage

# Build Your Group



Delegate Realms Out - You need a solid core to do all this

Put things on the calendar in advance

- Door Knocking Every Sunday 1-3 for First Month
- Business Canvassing Every Saturday 10 - 12
- Stop & Shop Mondays 6-7:30pm
- Educational Forum
- Pick Up Lawn Signs Thursdays 4pm - 7pm

Gather ALL contact information on pledge card

Plan a party for AFTER the vote

# Success Stories

Brookline - Community Choice Aggregation

Mary Dewart and Tommy Vitolo

Lexington - Becoming a Green Community

Mark Sandeen



# Brookline CCA: Background

- NSTAR Green (now Eversource) allowed customers to opt-in to more expensive green power. Local advocates with Climate Action Brookline went door-to-door seeking enrollment. When cost change was <\$7, yes. Else, NO!
- Climate Action Brookline and Mothers Out Front campaigned to enroll households in Mass Energy's tax-exempt 50% and 100% green programs.

# Brookline CCA: Framing

Given current Mass. REC prices, typical Brookline home could do +25% green for ~\$7.

- +25% *doubles* renewable energy for customer at bulk purchasing prices.
- +25% gets customers *halfway* to 100%.
- Other towns has done around 5%, and we're Brookline. Let's lead.

# Brookline CCA: The Players

- Petitioners: Tommy Vitolo, PhD energy professional and Town Meeting leader; Carol Oldham, Exec Director of MCAN and skilled consensus builder.
- Kitchen Cabinet: ~12 enviro-focused local government leaders and do-ers.
- Town Meeting Green Caucus & Climate Action Brookline: Enviro groups focused on local action, each big enough to influence Town Meeting members.
- A Board of Selectmen, pretty green, and the body ultimately tasked with deciding if the Town should proceed and with CCA implementation.
- Advisory Committee, more “small c” conservative and expected to be the bottleneck in the process. Embrace or steamroll?
- 240 elected Town Meeting Members, a *much* greener body than ten years ago.
- Town Staff: Town Counsel, Town Administrator, and staffer of Brookline’s Climate Action Committee important participants in process & implementation.

# Brookline CCA: The Pitches

1. This is the single biggest action local governments can take to reduce townwide CO<sub>2</sub>, and it's both low cost and nonintrusive. Other towns enrolling.
2. Consumer protections!
  - Opt out anytime for \$0.
  - Town and State ensure you get the real deal, not a fly-by-night pretender.
  - Potential for tax deductibility.

# Brookline CCA: Warrant Articles

Two separate Town Meeting warrant articles:

1. Give the Selectmen authority to sign a CCA agreement, and
2. Resolve that the CCA agreement the BOS signs be +25% and <\$7. If imperfectly aligned, Selectmen to do their best. As a resolution, it's non-binding. Requires trust.

# Brookline CCA: Didn't Pitch

- Lower prices through bulk purchasing. We couldn't guarantee a specific price, so didn't focus on it. When others suggested it publicly, we downplayed it.
- Opt-in vs. opt-out debates. State law mandates the process, not the Town.
- RECs: too complex. Stay out of the weeds.

# Brookline CCA: Feedback

Number 1 comment: we should have an *opt-up* to 100 percent renewables. We (wisely, I think) left that decision up to the Board of Selectmen, which allowed the Selectmen to embrace +100 and be proud of putting their own stamp on the CCA program.

# Brookline CCA: Success!

- Every committee vote leading to town meeting was **unanimous** - Selectmen, Advisory Subcommittee, Advisory Committee, Selectmen's Climate Action Committee, followed by Town Meeting vote.
- After ~18 month regulatory delay, program finally went live. Some hiccups on rollout, but nothing major.
- 4 Options: opt-out, +0, +25 (default), +100.
- Cost is ~\$2/month for +25, **much less than expected**, and tax deductible.



# Lexington - Sustainable Success

Becoming a Green Community  
Stretch Energy Code  
By Rights Solar Zoning

Climate Change Warrant Article



# Finding a Coach and Champion

Jeanne Krieger, Friendly Selectmen

- Identify supporters & opponents
- Listen for objections and concerns
- Understand approval process

Develop timeline and roadmap



# Create your Task Force

- Town staff and committee liaisons
- Resident experts
- Natural allies & Stakeholders
  - Conservation & Environmental groups
  - League of Women Voters
  - Students & Faith communities
  - Energy Committee
  - Builders & Real Estate professionals



# Claim the High Ground

Present the benefits for all stakeholders

- Builders
- Real Estate Brokers
- Business owners
- Homeowners
- Town Government



# Laying the Groundwork

## Lexington GWAC speaker series

### –Motivation & Practical Action

- Lester Brown – Saving Civilization
- James Hansen – Global Warming
- Richard Heinberg – Peak Everything
- Paul Eldrenkamp – Home Retrofits
- Carter Scott – Zero Energy Homes



# Establish Credibility

## Local research

- Typical new home size & energy use
- Economic benefits for typical resident
- Construction costs per square foot
- Housing starts & permits issued per year

## Recent examples

- Local builders and homeowners exceeding stretch
- DOER presents regional experience



# Elections & Town Meeting

## Make Stretch Code an election issue

- Call Town Meeting Members
- Attend Candidates Night
- Attend Precinct meetings
- Meet with Selectmen

“Will you take a leadership role in passing the stretch energy code?”



# *Sustainable Success!*

Lexington unanimously adopted the stretch energy code!

*This process  
is repeatable!*





# *Sustainable Success!*

2011 - Solar Task Force Formed

2012 - LexFarm Community Farm

2012 - ACROSS Lexington Greenway

2013 - Climate Change Warrant Article

2014 - Sustainability and Climate Action Plan

2014 - Solarize Lexington & Rooftop Solar

2015 - Community Choice Aggregation approved

2016 - Getting to Net Zero Emissions Task Force

2017 - Super-emitter gas leak pilot program



# Questions?

Email addresses:

Carol [carololdham@massclimateaction.net](mailto:carololdham@massclimateaction.net)

Alan: [alan@betterfutureproject.org](mailto:alan@betterfutureproject.org)

Claire B.W. Miller: [Claire@toxicsaction.org](mailto:Claire@toxicsaction.org)