168 Boston Hill Road

Andover, CT 06232

October 14, 2024

Editor

Rivereast News Bulletin

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Glastonbury, CT 06033

To The Editor:

Has it happened? Has hell finally frozen over? Do Don Denley and Scott Sauyet finally agree on something?

Yes! We both think the significant proposed changes to Andover's charter are terrible. They represent an institutional power grab. Buried in the middle, after a few innocent questions and before a few arguably reasonable questions are six questions that threaten the fabric of our New England Town Meeting.

Question 1 is about the state Constitution, not our charter. Questions 2 – 5 and 16 are simple and obviously good changes. Questions 12 – 15 discuss financial thresholds requiring a Town Meeting. Personally, I'm happy with 12 – 14, not 15.

But questions 6 – 11 represent a fundamental shift in our democracy.

Question 6 gives up your right to select the Town Clerk. Does anyone even remember a time when our elected Town Clerk wasn't wonderful?

Question 11 gives up your right to control local ordinances. The proposal strips this authority from the Town Meeting and gives it to the Board of Selectmen. They'll pretend that with only 50 votes necessary (really 116, a majority of a minimal quorum) to petition to overturn the ordinance, the power is still in voters hands. That's nonsense. It's a power grab.

At least those two questions are straightforward. Questions 7 – 10 are insidious. They ask innocuous-looking questions, burying the fact that they are taking authority away from you, the Board of Finance, and the local Board of Education, giving it to the Town Administrator and Board of Selectmen. Read especially Sections 802 and 803.

I've posted an overview of the proposed charter. You can see it at http://charter.andoverct.info/2024/. If you'd like me to include your own recommendations, email me at scott@sauyet.com.

Please, if you value our small-town democracy, vote No on 6 – 11!

Sincerely,

Scott Sauyet,

[scott@sauyet.com](mailto:scott@sauyet.com)

(860) 742-9800 (H)

(860) 335-2869 (C)