

—Slug:.....COMM-0844.opin.letter.000\_white  
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—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers  
—Format.....LETTERS - Opinions - Letters to the Editor  
—Dateline.....Newfane  
—Article Number:.....42690

**Notes from editor (not for publication):**

HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 All we are asking is that Town Meetings stick to town  
2 business

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

3  
####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

RE: "A fully democratic process" [Viewpoint, Nov. 19]:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 Dan DeWalt's first sentence — "when Vermont Town  
6 Meetings speak, the nation and the world listen" — is a classic  
7 example of grandiose thinking. Reality check: I doubt very much  
8 that any decision in Washington, D.C. is predicated on a vote at  
9 Newfane's Town Meeting. Similarly, I see little indication that it  
10 has any impact on decisions made in Montpelier.

11 Just because we think Newfane town affairs are the  
12 reason for Town Meetings, we are accused of everything from  
13 being racists to being white supremacists. We are accused of  
14 trying to censor ideas. In fact, all we are asking is that Town  
15 Meetings stick to town business.

16 It is sad that millions of dollars in expenditures are  
17 approved in less than five minutes with no questions or  
18 discussion, while a statement about our position on the situation  
19 in Gaza is discussed for nearly three hours. This is the sort of  
20 thing that turns people away from the Democratic process called  
21 Town Meeting.

22 Having attended the meeting in question, some facts  
23 need to be highlighted.

24 The article did not pass as originally moved, but instead  
25 was amended several times, which required multiple procedural  
26 moves. To say the end result was confusing is an understatement.

27 At the point when this issue finally made it to the floor,  
28 working folks had left the building and the remaining attendees  
29 had been sitting on hard chairs for three to four hours without  
30 food or drink. Seeing no end in sight and having to do real life  
31 things like pick up kids, fix dinner, go to work, some opponents  
32 had thrown in the towel.

33 The article as amended finally passed when the vast  
34 majority of those remaining were supporters.

35 Also, since not all attendees were Newfane voters and it  
36 was a voice or hand vote, there is no way to certify that all votes  
37 were legitimate.

38 An important point is that the people asking that these  
39 sorts of petitions not be placed on the warning are Democrats,  
40 Republicans, and independent voters.

41 As we go forward, is this the sort of thing that will bring  
42 people back to the process? Does anyone else see a future Town  
43 Meeting with all sorts of pet issues?

44 What are the parameters for topics to appear on the  
45 warning? Is this a precedent we want to set? I feel confident that

46 many voters could request their personal causes to be warned for  
47 Town Meeting.

48 None of this is to say that every single person hasn't got a  
49 right to their opinions. They certainly do. All we are saying is that  
50 Town Meeting is not the time or the place.

51 Other groups are handling their own campaigns without  
52 the involvement of government. They do effective things like  
53 write letters to their elected officials, who can actually do  
54 something. They organize informational meetings to educate  
55 citizens. They have yard signs made. They write letters to the  
56 editor.

57 There are a multitude of important problems around the  
58 world, including war, famine, and drugs. Let's not mire our Town  
59 Meetings in all of them.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

####BEGIN BIO/COATTAIL####

60

####END BIO/COATTAIL####

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

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####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

####BEGIN LINKS####

62

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

####BEGIN VIDEO####

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###END VIDEO###

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

###BEGIN LOGLINE###

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###END LOGLINE###