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—For section.....Voices/Letters from readers
—Format.....Opinions - Letters to the Editor - Special
—Dateline.....Brattleboro
—Article Number:.....42965



Notes from editor (not for publication):



HEADLINE ELEMENTS:

####BEGIN HED####

1 Australian ballot system doesn't eliminate our voices — it
2 encourages them

####END HED####

####BEGIN SUBHED####

3

####END SUBHED####

4 TEXT BODY:

####BEGIN TEXT####

5 I am writing in support of changing the way Brattleboro
6 residents govern our town; however, I do not agree that an open
7 Town Meeting creates a solution.

8 I attended one of the Charter Review Committee
9 meetings last year and found strong support for what was referred
10 to as a “hybrid” meeting option. There would be an informational
11 session, much as there is now the week before Annual

12 Representative Town Meeting (RTM), with a follow-up Australian
13 ballot vote.

14 There was concern that all members of the community
15 wouldn't have access to this meeting due to space limitations or
16 technology, but given the low voter turnout in general in this
17 town, that doesn't seem like an obstacle.

18 A truly open Town Meeting appears to mimic the current
19 RTM setup with simply the potential for more and longer circular
20 discussion. While I agree that having access to information and
21 hearing others' thoughts on issues is vital, this could also be
22 satisfied during the informational session.

23 There also seems to be a theory that with Australian
24 ballot, there is no ability to reject or amend an article or the
25 budget. However, there is always the option to vote in
26 opposition.

27 For example, if you don't agree with a budget that was
28 presented at an informational session, you could vote "no," and,
29 if enough people do the same, the budget would fail. The
30 Selectboard would have to create a revised budget and the town
31 would have to vote again. That would continue until a budget
32 passes, much the same process as happened this past year.

33 An Australian ballot system doesn't eliminate our voices
34 — it encourages them. Everyone votes. Period. Everyone has the
35 option to use their vote to voice their opinion so that 150 people
36 are not deciding how the taxes of a town of 12,000 are spent.

####END TEXT####

BIO/COATTAIL:

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

37 The writer is a Brattleboro Representative Town Meeting
38 member serving District 8.

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

LAST ISSUE IN WHICH THIS FILE CAN BE RUN:

39

####BEGIN MAXISSUE####

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####END MAXISSUE####

LINKS:

40

####BEGIN LINKS####

####END LINKS####

VIDEO:

41

####BEGIN VIDEO####

####END VIDEO####

LOGLINE (SOCIAL MEDIA):

42

####BEGIN LOGLINE####

####END LOGLINE####