

Policy for Town Counsel Review of Citizen Petition Articles

Adopted 18 November 2024

Whereas Citizen Petitions are an important means for Acton Voters to express their opinions and ask for consideration; and

Whereas it is important for all petitioners to be treated in the same way and operate under the same rules; and

Whereas the goals for a Citizen Petition may not be aligned with Select Board goals, it is inappropriate for Town Counsel, as the attorney for the Select Board and Town Manager, to aid in the development of such a petition; and

Whereas, each Annual Town Meeting typically has several Citizen Petitions, and legal assistance developing each would be expensive.

Therefore, it is the policy of the Select Board that:

1. In order to inform the Select Board and Town Meeting members, Town Counsel will review each citizen petition **after** it is certified by the Clerk. Town Counsel's opinion on the effect of the petition, should it subsequently pass at Town Meeting, will be presented to the Select Board and made available to Town Meeting members.
2. Before certification by the Clerk, Town Counsel will not provide advice and assistance to a voter about wording or other development of a citizen petition, without an authorizing vote by the Select Board.
3. Nothing in this policy is intended to inhibit the Town Manager and Select Board members from individually providing informal guidance to voters, who are considering submission of a citizen petition.
4. The Select Board will update and make available a written guide for voters, who are considering submission of a citizen petition.