

June 17, 2024

To the Editor:

This community has done a terrific job showing up to make a difference over the past year. I am pleased to be part of this process and excited about the direction we are headed in.

At STM and ATM, voters approved four “financial” projects that each deserve our consideration. They are all hard-won votes for important projects.

But no article is more important than Question 2, to fund the engineering costs for the new DPW on Town Hall Hill. This is because ANY DELAY in funding the preliminary costs will delay the DPW for years. And delays will cost taxpayers A LOT and keep the current DPW operating in sub-par conditions for longer than necessary.

We can and we must get started now, not only because the voters were crystal clear about this, but because the DPW staff needs it, and the community has the means and the will to get the first part of the work done ASAP. Most important, we need to do this because this is the right way to begin to get a much-needed new DPW on Town Hall Hill. YES to Q2 triggers specific approvals before full engineering and construction stages can begin — and voters have the final say on construction costs, too.

I was the spokesperson for ATM Article 14 — to put the DPW at Town Hall Hill — and I thank voters for passing this so enthusiastically. I was also lead spokesperson for ATM Article 42 to develop the concepts for the DPW at Town Hall Hill. In preparation for that I was confident that the costs envisioned for concept development — what is now called the “Schematic”— would cost well under \$500,000.

We are being asked to expend only the costs needed to complete the “schematic” (location survey, environmental assessment and basic site engineering/design) before we commit to full engineering/design costs, also covered by Q2 when the schematic is approved. As a first step, the “schematic” is reasonable at \$300K-\$500K.

I withdrew Article 42 because voters so strongly backed Article 13 as amended to develop just the schematic, resoundingly approved for Town Hall Hill as the site for the main DPW facility. All members of the Select Board and the FinCom chair also supported the amended Article 13.

I urge all voters to say YES to Ballot Question 2. The need is NOW, it is what the voters at ATM and STM deemed best in SIX related articles/votes, it gives us the info we need to make good choices on next steps, and the preliminary costs of THIS step are reasonable and affordable for taxpayers.

Thank you.

Dennis O'Brien
Truro, MA