

3-How can I stay involved in Town matters and ensure my voice is heard?

In the proposed Charter, there is even more opportunity for residents to be heard and participate than is provided in the current charter. In addition to a new, annual public hearing called by the Town Council President to receive input from voters on policy matters that they would like addressed, the proposed charter would maintain requirements for public hearings for zoning changes (as mandated by state law) as well as during the budget process. There are also numerous additional new opportunities for public participation as outlined in the below chart*.

And, most importantly, you will vote for every single member of the Town Council. They are responsible for making decisions that are in the best interest of the entire town and they're, ultimately, answerable to you. You can also vote them out (or even challenge their seat) if you're not happy with their performance.

Current Charter	Proposed Charter Revision
PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	
The current Charter does not specifically provide for public participation. Massachusetts Open Meeting Law rules, which require the permission of the Chair to speak, apply.	The proposed Charter requires that time be allotted for the public to speak on any matter not on the agenda. For matters that are on the agenda, the public may also speak with the approval of the Council. See Section 7-2
CITIZEN OR FREE PETITION	
Not provided in the current Charter.	Voters can petition either the Town Council or the School Committee to hold a public hearing for the purposes of seeking the passage of a particular measure or policy. See Section 7-1
INITIATIVE PETITION	
<p>Voters can place an article on an annual or special town meeting warrant by filing a signed petition with the Select Board. See Section 2-7.</p> <p>Voters can call for a Special Town Meetings with a signed petition. See Section 2-5.</p>	<p>Voters can petition the Town Council to request the passage of a particular measure. If Town Council has not voted on the Initiative, it may not conduct any further business until it's addressed.</p> <p>If Town Council should reject the measure, it can be forced to a vote at a special election by the filing of a supplementary petition by voters. See Section 7-3.</p>
REFERENDUM	
Not provided in the current Charter although the mechanisms set forth in Sections 2-5 and 2-7 above could be used for such purposes.	Part or all of certain measures approved by Town Council may be reversed if a voter petition is filed. Town Council may reconsider its vote on such measure and, if the measure is not rescinded, Town Council the measure will be suspended, and the matter will be put to a vote at a special election. See Section 7-4 .
RECALL OF ELECTED OFFICIALS	
Any elected official meeting certain criteria may be recalled under Section 3-1(g) .	Any elected official meeting certain criteria may be recalled under Section 3-6 .

* refer to the respective charters for full details of the participation measures.