

ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT

APRIL 28, 2003

Middlesex:

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

To any Constable in the Town of Groton

Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth aforesaid, you are hereby required to notify and warn said inhabitants of said Town qualified to vote on Town affairs to assemble in the Groton- Dunstable Middle School Auditorium in said Town on Monday, the twenty-eighth day of April next, at seven-thirty in the evening, to consider all business other than the election of Town officers and on the twentieth day of May next at an adjourned session there to give their ballots for one Assessor for three years; one Board of Health member for three years; one Commissioner of Trust Funds for three years; one Electric Light Commissioner for three years; one Moderator for three years; one Park Commissioner for three years; three Planning Board members for three years; one Selectman for three years; two Selectmen - one for two-year term and one for a one-year term; one Sewer Commissioner for three years; two GDRSD School Committee members for three years; one Town Clerk for three years; one Tree Warden for one year; one Highway Surveyor for three years; two Trustees of Public Library for three years; one Water Commissioner for three years and for the following questions: **BALLOT QUESTIONS: 1a.** Shall the Town of Groton be allowed to assess an additional \$1,476,323 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of funding in part the Town's apportioned share of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District budget for the fiscal year beginning July first, two thousand and three? **1b.** Shall the Town of Groton be allowed to assess an additional \$1,004,427 in real estate and personal property taxes for the purpose of funding in part the Town's apportioned share of the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District budget for the fiscal year beginning July first, two thousand and three?

ARTICLE 1: To see if the Town will vote to hear and act on the report of the Selectmen and other Town Officers and Committees, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored by: **BOARD OF SELECTMEN**

Board of Selectmen: **Recommendation- Support**

Summary: *To hear reports of Town Boards, Committees or Commissions.*

ARTICLE 2: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to apply for Federal and State Grants for which the Town is or may be eligible and to expend the funds received thereunder, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Summary: *To allow the Board of Selectmen to apply for grants*

ARTICLE 3: To see if the Town will vote to allow the following compensation for the following elected officials:

Selectmen	\$1,200.	Town Clerk	\$48,409.
Board of Selectmen, Chrm.	1,350	Town Moderator	65.
Assessors	1,100	Highway Surveyor	55,196.
Board of Assessors, Chrm.	1,250	Tree Warden	1,311.

for the ensuing year, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *To provide compensation for elected officials. The full-time elected officials' salaries include a 2% COLA.*

ARTICLE 4: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Personnel By-Law Wage and Classification Schedule as set forth in the Schedule to be distributed at Town Meeting, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: PERSONNEL BOARD

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation- 3 Support 2 Not Support, 2 Recused, 1 Abstention

Summary: *There will be two wage schedules presented at town meeting. The first schedule is based on the current year schedule plus a two percent COLA, and will be effective July 1, 2003 - Dec. 31, 2003. The second schedule that would be effective Jan. 1, 2004 - June 30, 2004, incorporates the Personnel Board study recommendations.*

ARTICLE 5: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to enter into an intermunicipal agreement with the Town of Townsend for the purpose of providing Advanced Life Support (ALS) ambulance service, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *To enter into an agreement with the Town of Townsend for the purpose of providing Advanced Life Support (ALS) for the cost of \$20,000.*

ARTICLE 6: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate such sums of money as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the Town for the next fiscal year (2004), and act on the budget of the Finance Committee, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: FINANCE COMMITTEE

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-At Town Meeting

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *Budget - See Finance Committee report*

ARTICLE 7: To see if the Town will vote in accordance with Section 8 of Chapter 533 of the Acts of 1991, as amended by Chapter 115 of the Acts of 1995, to approve the budget of the Groton Country Club and Recreation Authority, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: COUNTRY CLUB & RECREATION AUTHORITY

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *The legislation creating the Country Club and Recreation Authority requires that the Authority present its annual budget to the Town for approval.*

ARTICLE 8: To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from the Sewer Enterprise Fund Surplus to the fiscal 2004 Enterprise Department Budget, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: SEWER COMMISSION

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: \$21,985. To reduce the proposed increase in rates for FY 2004.

ARTICLE 9: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds or borrow a sum of money to purchase a front-end loader for the Highway Department, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: HIGHWAY SURVEYOR

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-Support

Capital Planning: Recommendation-Support

Summary: \$127,300. *This is a scheduled replacement of a current machine that has been on the Capital Plan for over 6 years. It is a front-line machine that does everything from plowing roads in the winter to day-to-day activities all summer long. The current machine will be retained for parts since it has little trade-in value.*

ARTICLE 10: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds or borrow a sum of money to purchase and replace the Police, Fire and EMS radio dispatch system, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-Support

Capital Planning: Recommendation-Support

Summary: \$39,000. *The current system was put into use when the Public Safety Building was built over ten years ago and is in need of constant repair. A new system will take advantage of the changes in technology, such as touch screen, Windows NT and a paging system.*

ARTICLE 11: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds or borrow a sum of money to re-shingle the roof at Squannacook Hall, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-Support

Capital Planning: Recommendation-Support

Summary: \$16,675. *The roofing shingles at Squannacook Hall, which are over 20 years old, are breaking off with whole tabs missing. All three layers of shingles need to be removed before installing 30-year grade shingles. Additionally, water dam sheeting and metal drip edging will be installed.*

ARTICLE 12: To see if the town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds or borrow a sum of money for costs associated with the acquisition of land, such land being described generally as follows:

Property in the Town of Groton off Gilson Road, Groton Assessors' Map 135, Lot 38 and Map 253, Lot 2, adjacent to the Littleton town line.

for the purpose of use as an elementary school site, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-5 Not Support 3 Support

Summary: \$ 75,000 *This article is for costs associated with acquisition of property, approximately 30 acres known as the Gilson land, adjacent to the Littleton line, to ascertain its viability as a site for an elementary school. Land appraisal, engineering studies and exploration of legal costs need to be undertaken in order to make a recommendation on the purchase or taking of the property.*

ARTICLE 13: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, transfer from available funds or borrow a sum of money to be added to the sum already on deposit in the Conservation Fund, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-2 Support at \$50,000, 1 Support at \$100,000

Finance Committee: Recommendation-5 Support at \$75,000, 3 Not Support \$75,000

Summary: \$200,000 from Stabilization. Maintaining the Conservation Fund allows the Town to act more quickly in acquiring or preserving open space as land becomes available. Adding to the Conservation Fund on an annual basis helps offset substantial financial impacts in any one fiscal year. The fund, prior to Town Meeting, has approximately \$140,905.

ARTICLE 14: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money for the Reserve Fund, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-Support

Summary: \$50,000. *For the Finance Committee Reserve Fund for unanticipated emergencies.*

ARTICLE 15: To see if the Town will vote to renew the revolving account under Chapter 44, § 53E½ of the General Laws for the purpose of utilizing receipts and fees received under Chapter 198 of the Code of the Town of Groton, Soil Erosion and Sediment Control, said receipts and fees to be credited to said account and expended by the Earth Removal Advisory Committee for administration, oversight and review activities under Chapter 198, with the maximum amount to be expended in said account not to exceed \$10,000 for Fiscal Year 2004, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: EARTH REMOVAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *The Earth Removal Advisory Committee deposits application fees in a revolving account to pay for technical review of plans submitted under the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control By-law.*

ARTICLE 16: To see if the town will vote to amend Chapter 153, Historic Districts and Commission, of the Code of the Town of Groton by deleting from section 153-2.A(1), Establishment of districts, the phrase "Town of Groton date March 2, 1964, scale one inch equals four hundred feet" and substituting therefore "Town of Groton dated March 10, 2003";

and by deleting from section 153-2.A (2), Establishment of districts, the phrase “Town of Groton dated March 2, 1964, scale one inch equals four hundred feet” and substituting therefor “Town of Groton dated March 10, 2003”;

and by deleting from section 153-2.A (3), Establishment of districts, the phrase “Town of Groton dated March 2, 1964, revised January 11, 1965, scale one inch equals four hundred feet” and substituting therefor “Town of Groton dated March 10, 2003”;

a copy of which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *The map delineating the three Historic Districts was hand-drawn in the 1960’s. This map is now tattered and very difficult to read. The new map was generated using the updated Town maps and more accurately reflects the boundary lines of the districts.*

ARTICLE 17: To see if the Town will vote to accept the conveyance of a parcel of land to be managed by the Town Forest Committee, consisting of approximately 8.5 acres, described in a deed recorded with Middlesex South Registry of Deeds in book 27198, Page 090, being shown as Parcel 5 on Assessors’ Map 210, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: TOWN FOREST COMMITTEE

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *This article will allow the Town to accept a generous gift of land from Elliot and Doris Blood to the Town Forest. The parcel is located to the northwest of the Town Forest. This parcel is to be referred to as the former Blood Farm property.*

ARTICLE 18: To see if the Town will vote to amend the Groton Wetlands Protection Bylaw, designated as Chapter 215 in the Code of the Town of Groton, as follows:

- A.) CHANGE Subsection 215-7.A (1) (b), Prohibited Activity, from “Erection of permanent buildings, including, but not limited to, barns, garages, or attached structures” TO “Erection of permanent structures, including, but not limited to, barns, garages, or attached structures”;
- B.) CHANGE Subsection 215-7-A (1) (c), Prohibited Activity from “Construction of parking lots or use of land for parking of motor vehicles” TO “Construction of parking lots/driveways or use of land for parking of motor vehicles”;
- C.) ADD to Subsection 215.7A (1), Prohibited Activity, a new paragraph (g) as follows: “Grading except for minor grading as defined in the Regulations adopted under this chapter.”

Or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *In the 1½ years since the Wetlands Protection Bylaw was implemented, the Commission has become aware of several examples in which the spirit and intent (water supply protection in particular) of the Bylaw could be circumvented. The proposed modifications will address these issues.*

ARTICLE 19: To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to join with the Board of Selectmen of the Town of Pepperell in petitioning the General Court for special legislation, substantially as follows:

An Act amending Chapter 383 of the Acts of 1991, entitled

“AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN THE TOWNS OF GROTON AND PEPPERELL”

Be it enacted, etc., as follows:

Section 1. Section 1 of Chapter 383 of the Acts of 1991 is hereby

amended by deleting said section and substituting the following new section:

Section 1. The following described lines shall hereafter comprise certain portions of the boundary line between the Town of Groton and the Town of Pepperell: Beginning at a witness mark (WM1) at the corner of Groton and Pepperell a distance of about 87 feet easterly of the center of the Nashua River, said witness mark having coordinates X = 635440.6773 feet, Y = 3063644.7752; Thence along the existing boundary line between Groton and Pepperell N 73°-31'-26" E a distance of 2082.975 feet to a stone bound on the town line at Longley Road/Groton Street, having coordinates X = 637438.1201, Y = 3064235.5437; Thence continuing N 73°-31'-26" E a distance of 4066.506 feet to the corner at stone bound GP(a), having coordinates X = 641337.6453, Y = 3065388.8765; Thence S 23°-13'-40" W a distance of 330.025 feet to the corner at stone bound GP(b) having coordinates X = 641207.4873, Y = 3065085.6021; Thence N 70°-13'-41" E a distance of 1211.560 feet to the corner at stone bound GP(c) having coordinates X = 642347.6226, Y = 3065495.4432; Thence N 68°-50'-38" W a distance of 301.767 feet to the corner at stone bound GP(d) having coordinates X = 642066.1947, Y = 3065604.3540; Thence along the existing boundary line between Groton and Pepperell N 73°-31'-26" E a distance of 3213.312 feet to a stone bound having coordinates X = 645147.5600, Y = 3066515.7059; located at Yvonne Drive, a public way within the Town of Pepperell; Thence continuing N 73°-31'-26" E a distance of 1075.87 feet to the Dunstable-Groton-Pepperell town corner having coordinates X = 646179.2520, Y = 3066820.8416.

Coordinates used in this act are based on the Massachusetts Coordinate System, Mainland Zone, as described in sections eight to thirteen, inclusive of chapter ninety-seven of the General Laws.

Section 2. This Act shall take effect upon its passage.

Or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *This article restates the intent of the legislation passed in 1991 that attempted to correct the Groton-Pepperell Bound (town line). The 1991 legislation had numerous clerical errors that the special act proposed in this article will correct.*

ARTICLE 20: To see if the Town will vote to adjust the exemption amount and eligibility factors for the property tax exemption for senior citizens under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause

41C, in accordance with Section 51 of Chapter 184 of the Acts of 2002, to become effective starting in Fiscal Year 2004 as follows:

1. By increasing the allowable income for applicants to \$20,000 for single persons and \$30,000 for married persons; and
2. By increasing the allowable assets for applicants to \$40,000 for single persons and \$55,000 for married persons;

Or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: BOARD OF ASSESSORS

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-At Town Meeting

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *The 2002 legislation creates a new provision that allows the town to make certain adjustments in the eligibility requirements seniors must meet in order to qualify for a property tax exemption under MGL Chapter 59 S 41C. Groton is proposing to change the gross receipts limit from \$13,000 to \$20,000 if single and from \$15,000 to \$30,000 if married and the whole estate from \$28,000 to \$40,000 if single and from \$30,000 to \$55,000 if married.*

ARTICLE 21: To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 218, Zoning, of the Code of the Town of Groton by deleting existing section 218-30, Water Resource Protection Overlay District in its entirety, substituting therefor a new section 218-30, Water Resource Protection Overlay District, the text of which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: PLANNING BOARD

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-At Town Meeting

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *This article replaces the existing Water Resource Protection Districts with a new map and new provisions.*

ARTICLE 22: To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 218, Zoning, of the Code of the Town of Groton by deleting existing section 218-26, Open Space Residential Development, in its entirety:

Item 1. Substituting therefor a new Section 218-26, entitled Flexible Development, the text of which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk.

Item 2. Adding the following new definition to Section 218-4:

TRANSFER LOT - A parcel of land with not less than 80,000 square feet used to establish a density bonus in a Flexible Development, as set forth in section 218-26. Such Transfer Lot shall be (1) determined by the Planning Board to be of special importance because of its visual prominence or potential vista blockage, ecological significance or fragility, value as agricultural or recreational land, critical relation or proximity to the Town's drinking water supply, or because it is identified in the Town's open space plan; (2) not wetlands, as defined in G.L. c. 131, s. 40, or not land used to satisfy dimensional requirements in any other development of land; (3) subject to a permanent conservation restriction pursuant to G.L. 184, ss. 31-33, or conveyed to the Town, or conveyed to a nonprofit organization, the principal purpose of which is the conservation of open space or other appropriate purpose.

Item 3. Deleting from Section 218-13, the Schedule of Use Regulations, the entry "Flexible development or cluster development as allowed under the provisions of § 218-26" and substituting therefor:

Flexible Development

pursuant to § 218-26 PBNNNNNN

Item 4. Deleting, in Section 218-20, Schedule of Intensity Regulations, note 1, the words "For cluster development, see § 218-26F(2)."

Or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: PLANNING BOARD

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *This article replaces the existing Open Space Residential Development provisions with new Flexible Development provisions.*

ARTICLE 23: To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 218, Zoning, of the Code of the Town of Groton by deleting existing section 281-26.1, Major Residential Development, and

Item 1. Substituting therefor a new section 218-26.1, entitled Major Residential Development, the text of which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk.

Item 2. Deleting the definition of “Major Residential Development” from section 218-4.

Item 3. Adding the following note 4 to Section 218-20, the schedule of Intensity Regulations, and attaching such note to the frontage requirement in the R-A and R-B Districts:

⁴lots shown on a residential compound plan endorsed by the planning board pursuant to the subdivision control law, may, upon the grant of a special permit by the planning board, reduce lot frontage to fifty (50) feet.

Item 4. Deleting section 218-23D, the balance of the sentence after the words “no more than” and substitute the words “two lots”.

Or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: **PLANNING BOARD**

Board of Selectmen: **Recommendation- Support**

Finance Committee: **Recommendation-**

Summary: *This article replaces the existing Major Residential Development provisions with new Major Residential Development provisions.*

ARTICLE 24: To see if the town will vote to amend Chapter 218, Zoning, of the Code of the Town of Groton by deleting existing section 218-28, Development Rate Limitation, and substituting therefor a new Section 218-28, Rate of Development and 218-28.1, Subdivision Phasing, the text of which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: PLANNING BOARD

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-At Town Meeting

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *This article replaces the existing Development Rate Limitation provisions with new Rate of Development and Subdivision Phasing provisions.*

ARTICLE 25: To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 218, Zoning, of the Code of the Town of Groton to add a new district, entitled Open Space - Agricultural (OS-A) District, as follows:

Item 1. Add the following entry to section 218-8D:

(4) OS-A Open Space - Agricultural District

Item 2. Add the following to section 218-12:

- g. Public Use District is intended to regulate land in public use or land with public facilities.
- h. OS-A Open Space-Agricultural District is intended to regulate parcels within the town permanently restricted pursuant to G.L. c. 134, ss. 31-33, so that such parcels may be assessed and taxed at a uniform rate most advantageous to the owners thereof. No parcel shall be included within the OS-A District unless such permanent restriction pursuant to statute shall be first

verified by town counsel. Uses allowed in the district shall be those consistent with such permanent restriction.

Or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: PLANNING BOARD

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *This article establishes a new zoning district for permanently protected land in open space or agricultural use.*

ARTICLE 26: To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 218, Zoning, of the Code of the Town of Groton and the Zoning Map by deleting from section 218-9, Location of Districts, the phrase “Town of Groton, Massachusetts – Zoning Map, dated March 1, 1998, and by substituting therefor, “Town of Groton, Massachusetts – Zoning Map, dated March 10, 2003,” a copy of which is on file in the Office of the Town Clerk, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: PLANNING BOARD

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *This article replaces the existing Zoning Map with an updated Zoning Map.*

ARTICLE 27: To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 196, Signs, of the Code of the Town of Groton by deleting the following section:

§196-7 Illumination and movement

- A. Signs may be illuminated by steady white light which does not cause a traffic hazard and shall not affect neighboring premises. Interior illumination will not be permitted.
- B. A lighted sign on an intermittent or flashing circuit or the movement of any light used in connection with any sign, such as blinking, traveling, flaring or changing degree of intensity, will not be permitted, with the exception of barber poles.

- C. No neon lighting will be permitted.
- D. Movement of a sign body or any segment thereof, such as rotating, revolving, moving up or down, or any other type of action involving a change of position of a sign body or segment thereof, whether caused by mechanical or other means, will not be permitted.
- E. No streamers, banners, flags, spinners, balloons or strings of lights are permitted on permanent signs for purposes of advertising.
 - 1. One (1) “open” flag will be permitted for businesses.
 - 2. Decorative flags will be permitted on residences.
- F. Illuminated vending machine signs are not permitted.

And inserting in its place the following section:

§196-7 Illumination and movement

- A. Signs may be externally illuminated by steady white light that does not cause a traffic hazard nor affect neighboring premises.
 - 1. Signs must be illuminated from above with light focused on sign area. Upward illumination will not be permitted.
 - 2. Illumination intensity shall be kept at the minimal level necessary to illuminate sign and must create as little ambient light as possible.
 - 3. Lighting fixtures must be visually unobtrusive.
 - 4. Interior illuminated signs will not be permitted.
 - 5. Existing signs not meeting the above illumination regulations will be given until January 1, 2004 to come into compliance.
- B. Intermittent, flashing or moving illumination such as blinking, traveling, flaring or changing degree of intensity will not be permitted.
- C. Neon lighting will not be permitted.
- D. With the exception of barber poles, any movement or change of position of a sign body or segment thereof, whether caused by mechanical or other means, will not be permitted.
- E. No streamers, banners, flags, spinners, balloons or strings of lights are permitted.
 - 1. One (1) “open” flag will be permitted for businesses.
 - 2. Decorative flags will be permitted on residences.
- F. Illuminated vending machine signs are not permitted.

Or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: SIGN COMMITTEE

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *The increase of lighted signs in Groton has created traffic safety hazards for passing motorists and resulted in light pollution of neighboring properties and the night sky. This amendment to the Sign Bylaw seeks to regulate the position and intensity of sign lighting to mitigate these problems.*

ARTICLE 28: To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter 196, Signs, of the Code of the Town of Groton by deleting the following sub-section:

§196-8 Temporary Signs

- B. Temporary signs can only be displayed for less than thirty (30) days in a calendar year. They must meet the same standards of compatibility, readability, nondistractability and safety as permanent signs. Temporary signs to be placed on Town property require the approval of the Selectmen. No temporary sign shall exceed twenty (20) square feet.

And inserting in its place the following sub-section:

§196-8 Temporary Signs

- B. Temporary signs may only be displayed for less than sixty (60) days in a calendar year. Temporary signs must meet the same standards of size, compatibility, readability, illumination, nondistractability and safety as permanent signs. Temporary signs to be placed on Town property require the approval of the Selectmen. No temporary sign shall exceed sixteen (16) square feet.

Or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: SIGN COMMITTEE

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation- Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *The current limit of thirty days in a calendar year for displaying temporary signs has been found to be inadequate for businesses in Groton to promote sales and special events. Extending this limit to sixty days in a calendar year will give businesses additional promotional opportunity without creating significant visual pollution.*

ARTICLE 29: To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate or transfer from available funds a sum of money to be added to the sum already on deposit in the Town Stabilization Fund, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-At Town Meeting

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *Prior to Town Meeting, the fund had a balance of approximately \$783,267. The amount to be added to this fund will be determined at Town Meeting. For good financial management, it is recommended to have between 5% - 10% of the town's operating budget in the Stabilization Fund.*

ARTICLE 30: To see if the Town will vote to transfer a sum of money from the Excess and Deficiency Fund (free cash) for the purpose of affecting the tax rate for the period beginning July 1, 2003, and ending June 30, 2004, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: **BOARD OF ASSESSORS**

Board of Selectmen: **Recommendation-At Town Meeting**

Finance Committee: **Recommendation-**

Summary: *Prior to Town Meeting, the balance in Unreserved Fund Balance was approximately \$886,307. The purpose of this article is to transfer a sum of money to be determined at Town Meeting from Free Cash to reduce the tax rate.*

ARTICLE 31: To see if the town will vote to rezone from R-A (Residential-Agricultural) to B-1 (Business) certain premises situated at 55-61 Lowell Road owned by Gibbet Hill Farm, LLC, consisting of approximately 280,697± square feet or 6.444± acres of area, which premises is a portion of the land described in a deed recorded with Middlesex South District Registry of Deeds in Book 31800, Page 319, being shown as Parcel 3 on Assessors' 116 and to approve a concept plan entitled "Concept Plan, Proposed Restaurant, Gibbet Hill in the Town of Groton, Massachusetts," prepared by Beals Associates, Inc., said plan being on file with the Town Clerk, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: **PETITION OF GIBBET HILL FARM, LLC, STEVEN H. WEBBER AND NANCY M. WEBBER AND OTHERS**

Board of Selectmen: **Recommendation- Support**

Finance Committee: **Recommendation-**

Summary: *This article would allow the conversion of a barn at the base of Gibbet Hill into a restaurant. In addition, a second barn on the site would potentially be improved to be a function hall/retail space. A deed restriction would be placed on the 6.4 acres of land requiring any other change in use of the land to come before a Town committee (probably the Planning Board) for approval. The restaurant location would provide townspeople with better access to the views of Gibbet Hill and probably provide an easier access to the newly enabled trail network. The center of the cattle operation would be moved away from the site to Angus Hill, although cattle would remain on Gibbet Hill.*

ARTICLE 32 To see if the town will vote to accept the provisions of Chapter 148, Section 26H, Lodging or Boarding Houses; Automatic Sprinkler Systems, or take any action thereon.

Sponsored By: PETITION OF CHRISTOPHER J. KELLEY AND OTHERS

Board of Selectmen: Recommendation-3 Not Support

Finance Committee: Recommendation-

Summary: *Adoption of this local option section of the fire prevention laws will require the installation of automatic sprinklers in certain occupancies. Sprinklers will be required in new construction of lodging and boarding houses and retroactively sprinklers will be required in existing lodging and boarding houses within five years of the passage of this measure. Any order issued to enforce this law can be appealed to the fire safety commission .*

And you will serve this warrant by posting a true and attested copy of the same in at least two public places in said Groton, fourteen days before the day appointed for said meeting.

Hereof fail not and make return of your doings to the Town Clerk on or before time of said meeting.

Given under our hands this seventh day of April in the year of our Lord, two thousand three.

OFFICER'S RETURN

Groton Middlesex

Dann Chamberlin, Chairman

Pursuant to the within Warrant,

I have this day notified the

INHABITANTS to assemble at the

Thomas D. Hartnett, Clerk

Time, Place and for the purpose

within mentioned as within directed.

Personally posted by constable.

Peter S. Cunningham, Member