

## What is a Citizen's Petition?

A Citizen's Petition is a proposal brought to Town Meeting by a citizen or a group of citizens which will appear as a warrant article to be voted on. Proposals may include actions relating to:

- Town By-Laws (to adopt, repeal or amend) or
- Resolutions/Advisories on such topics as: zoning, expenditures, the environment, social justice.

*On local matters:* While the Select Board or School Committee or other Board is not required to follow the advice of Town Meeting on matters where they have authority, they customarily make every effort to do so.

*On federal and state issues:* advisories are sent to legislators/officials urging support of legislation and expressing the views of Shutesbury voters.

## Steps to Follow

- **Start Early.** Allow several months to develop the proposal. Talk to others! Learn which town committee or board deals with the subject matter related to your proposal. Find out what is already in effect. Some processes can take more than 3 months. **Important:** If your petition involves a Zoning or Wetlands Bylaw, or the Community Preservation Act, a Public Hearing will be required. Contact the Planning Board, Conservation Commission or CPA Committee for details.
- **Draft** the petition. **Review** it with the Moderator, Town Administrator or committee members so that it contains appropriate language and is allowable under State Statutes.
- **Pick up the petition/signature form** from the Town Clerk. **Collect signatures** from registered Shutesbury voters. Ten (10) or more are required for a petition for Annual Town Meeting; 100 or more for a Special Town Meeting. The wording of the petition becomes fixed at this stage.
- **Submit** the signed petition to the Town Clerk and to the Select Board at a meeting not less than 45 days before Town Meeting.

## Town Meeting Time

Copies of the petition are included in the town mailing of the warrant to every household. If desired, you can bring an information handout for the Town Meeting community information table.

At Town Meeting, after the motion related to the Article is read and seconded, the Moderator will ask the petitioner for an explanation of the Article. Presentations will be limited to 5 minutes. No AV aids can be used unless previously approved of by the Moderator. The Moderator will then call for questions and will direct them to the petitioner and/or other informed persons for responses. Discussion and a vote will follow. Approved By-Laws will be submitted to the Attorney General's Office for review.