

On Wednesday, April 21, 2010 10:54:05 AM GMT -05:00 US/Canada Eastern Matt Johnson wrote (Chamber of Commerce reply at bottom):
Subject: Survey on town meeting articles

Stephanie,

I have seen a copy of a survey that you posted today on Town Meeting articles 46 and 47, and I felt that I should alert you that the description of Article 47 in the survey is inaccurate.

Unlike Article 46, Article 47 does not depend upon the deliberations of the Planning Board, so the Article 47 motion has already been revised and submitted to the Moderator with the change to the number of locations that qualify a business as "formula" (from 7 to 10), as well as the number of formula businesses allowed.

(See <http://www.preserveourvillagecenters.org/draft-motion> for the latest version.) As a result, Comina and Potpourri would NOT be formula businesses under the proposed bylaw, and even though the limit in Concord Center has been restored to 13 (as originally written in the warrant), that leaves 12 formula businesses remaining in Concord Center - one short of the limit.

Your survey also claims that the Crosby's, CVS and Rite-Aid spaces would have to be subdivided if they were ever vacated, but that's only if the business that replace them qualifies as a "formula" business. Neither of our two grocery stores in town are formula stores today, and there are ways that a new firm could avoid that designation as well.

As a consequence of these inaccuracies in the survey, I suspect that any results that you get on Article 47 will not reflect chamber members' opinion of the actual motion when it goes before Town Meeting.

It does not further the debate on this important issue to gather input based on invalid assumptions. I'm surprised by the clearly slanted tone of the survey, since Article 47 supports the mission of the chamber as printed on your website: "The Concord Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to promoting and serving business, supporting tourism and fostering a strong economic climate, all consistent and in harmony with the character and culture of Concord." The objective of Article 47 is to preserve the village character of Concord, which attracts tourists, shoppers and residents alike. The survey fails to provide this context for the bylaw, making it difficult for anyone to rationalize support for it. As it's written, even I would have trouble checking "yes" next to your Article 47 question.

If your objective is simply to attack Article 47 regardless of the facts, then there's not much more to discuss. But if you would really like to understand your members' views on this subject, I'd like to offer to help put together a more objective approach.

Matt Johnson
Article 47
21 Winthrop St

On Wednesday, April 21, 2010 11:17:44 AM GMT -05:00 US/Canada Eastern Stephanie Stillman wrote:

We took the Articles from the Town website so, if there have been changes in Article 47, they are not reflected there.

We are not attacking the by-laws but want people to understand the implications for businesses and the information we received had been researched prior to the writing of the survey.

We are not taking a position as the Chamber until we have heard from members. We have had several phone calls seeking more information and we believe that we answer them without bias.

Stephanie M. Stillman
Executive Director
Concord Chamber of Commerce
15 Walden Street, Suite 7
Concord, MA 01742
Tel. 978-369-3120