

Public Interactions Prior to Covid-10

I don't recall members of the public attending

Members of public can send questions/input to a general email. Emails and responses are shared with committee.

There isn't much public participation.

Generally no public participation

It's exceedingly rare that the public ever attends and speaks

We don't generally have public comment, but members of the public do sometimes use the zoom chat feature.

To date, we have not had much public involvement in our committee, though we are trying to solicit public input into our work.

I believe we would welcome public comment.

Committee members speak first and then any members of the public are free to comment

Not many members of the public attend or speak.

I don't recall public input, except that there were always representatives from a lot of different groups at the table, and they were mainly all volunteers.

Meetings are informal, but one sometimes must be recognized to speak.

Our meetings were open to the public, but again I don't remember any attending

We might try to use a more formal process in the future to save time.

Emails, phone calls, in-person.

We don't have appointed members -- everyone is a member and part of the public.

While the meetings are open & posted, no member of the public ever attends.

Members of public can speak after FinCom members are through when called on.

Generally rely on public comment period but are relatively informal in that, at times, the public may engage to ask clarifying question or provide information in the context of the current discussion as allowed by Chair.

Chair does a good job asking for public comments.

It's rather informal, and sometimes comments are invited or permitted mid-meeting.

We also have coffee chats, contact forms, APD incident reports, complaint forms, etc.

It was rare for members of the public to attend ITAC meetings

There hasn't been public interest or interaction in years

Members of the public may send emails or otherwise communicate with library staff who may share with the Board

Public does not often attend

I've never seen a member of the public participate, except for SB candidates who were observers
LRPC meetings are typically one hour long, so there is not a public comment period. In my experience on the Committee, members of the public have been recognized upon their request to address the Committee.

Very little public input

Not sure - haven't been at a meeting with members of the public yet

Members of the public send emails to our members (or to a point person), There is an open comment period where public can provide comments or input,

Sometimes if there are several people Attending, we do not allow comments until the end when the meetings were held in person oh this is before Covid.

When virtual, public can use chat. And bring up a topic at end under New Business

We have some meetings that preclude public comment as well.

Additional Comments Re Public Participation

None

Public participation waned once the design and vote were confirmed. If our meetings were in person today, I doubt we'd have more than 1-2 people at any meeting

We always had public comment pre-Covid.

Would sometimes see members of the public.

We generally only had members of the public present for hearings on abatement applications. Those hearings are only open to the specific homeowner who filed the abatement.

No

Generally no public participation

Few public participants but it did occur on multiple occasions.

It was slim at ACOA

They weren't- our committee is new.

General members of the public did not attend our meetings. A few people with specialized interest, often serving on or representing other committees, did attend.

While public attendance at our meetings is minimal, there was less of it when meetings were held in person.

No

These meetings were really hard to schedule. It would have been much easier to do over Zoom.

Participation was quite varied depending on the matters that were being considered.

We have more public participation during virtual meetings than we had for in-person meetings

We don't get a lot of public participation

We have volunteers who attend regularly, but we almost never get general members of the public.

NA, see above

Other than a few regular volunteers and invited guests, we didn't have many members of the public attend the meeting.

It was often difficult for individuals with disabilities to always have access due to physical disabilities.

No difference to current participation

Public participation as noted above.

n/a (we didn't meet before Covid)

They were onerous and lacked accessibility for marginalized people.

Very informal, anyone can speak anytime they are recognized. Very interactive meetings.

Anyone could attend, we wouldn't know in advance who might do so.

It was sparse.

Other than board or committee members, we often do not know how many members of the public are going to join a given meeting. As noted above, meeting rooms are a limited resource and on Tuesdays through Wednesdays it was not always possible to find a room.

Infrequent public attendance

The inclement weather in the winter was sometimes a challenge.

Public participation was usually helpful.

Meetings were 100% better when held in person- both for members & the public

Public did participate either pro or con on the issues before the Commission

Chair always did a good job soliciting public input

Public often gave formal presentations and shared printed materials.

Public participation is easier to handle on zoom. We call on people rather than having individuals just speaking up. However, sharing screens is pretty time consuming.

Public would attend when there was an increase in concern within community.

No

Depending on the issues of the day, we had more or less of the public participating

There were instances of disruptive public presence in the past, before my time.

Public participation placed an undue burden as people had to be physically present from 8-10 PM (usual meeting time)

In person meetings, the public comment portion was better followed.

There wasn't any

I only attended one in-person meeting before the COVID-19 meeting restrictions were put in place.

I joined during COVID so I cannot answer this question

It seemed a tad more collegial

Have had more people join on Zoom than used to come in person.

Occasional public attendance; sometimes hard for someone to literally "come out" to meeting

No – The public only attended the library board meetings for the retail shop RFP process

If a member of the public had an issue he/she wished put on the agenda, he/she would be invited to speak to the issue.

We rarely had public participation pre-COVID and that has held true with remote meetings. Maybe only once or twice did anyone attend.

No

As far as I know, there was no concerted effort to attract public input.

We rarely have non-members attend our meetings

N/A – joined in 2020

When they attend, members of the public have always been welcomed and respected at the meetings.

Quite manageable.

We always appreciate and encourage public participation.

Before, we never really had public participation, since remote some members of the public address concerns they had about parking to us via zoom

Not a lot of public participation for this committee.

Very few members of the public attended meetings pre-covid

We would have welcomed visitors, but we never had a single one.

We often held meetings in a room of insufficient size for the number of attendees. Meetings were always recorded by ACMI.

I believe the presentation were better in person

No meeting prior to Covid

no

Some meetings do not have public participation, some do.

Under prior chairs at some meetings there was informal participation during the meeting

My experience on this committee has only been during COVID.

Subcommittee meetings are meant to be informal and open to discussion from interested folks.

No comments

This committee held a joint meeting with the Town Meeting Electronic Voting Study Committee in January of 2013.

No

We hardly had attendees

In person, we asked that the public allow for Committee members to sit together, at the table, and public sit in other available seats

No additional comments

It was usually calm, but on larger, more contentious issues, things could get rowdy with people talking over each other.

I believe we had fewer attendees at in-person meetings

Attendance on location inconvenient and we did not present information well.

Public Interactions During Covid19

We have not met since the pandemic.

Only via email to my knowledge. I'm not aware of any public participation in meetings during COVID there is no longer any interaction with the public at our meetings

Our committee became less of a focus after the June 2019 debt exclusion vote.

Yes, often (especially after the fatality at Mass/Appleton).

Because we were prevented from holding in person hearings with homeowners regarding their abatement applications, we had them submit any written materials to the Board and had staff contact them concerning their respective abatement application. The Board reviewed the submissions and acted on them.

The invitation link is posted.

Via Zoom during public comment periods

No meetings, but probably no participation

Yes, we had public attend virtual meetings too.

Email and Zoom chat

Via email; also some members of the public (usually one or two and usually the same people) attend via Zoom

Via email outside of meeting times

A few times the public has joined

They have reached out to a point person, I believe.

It has been similar

Via Zoom

On selected topics, members of the public have been invited ahead of time to participate in discussions. I also believe that on occasion, members of public participate informally.

No change from pre Covid in this regard.

We have small meetings - they raise their hands and speak when called on. Again, it's rare

No

The meetings stopped when the census occurred. So overall, I don't recall remote meetings.

We stopped meeting when COVID began.

Email and by remote attendance.

By speaking during public comment section of permit hearings; by sending emails with comments and information to the Conservation Commission that we then address during a public meeting; and by

contacting the Conservation Commission via phone or email with questions or concerns that may get forwarded to specific commissioners for response.

Via zoom

By attending meetings via Zoom and/or emailing

Anyone could join on zoom

NA, as the DRWG has been disbanded

Through zoom

There hasn't been a big change, that I know of.

There is a small increase in public attendance

Positive involvement in meeting

Emails, phone calls

Email or phone

direct participation from public via Zoom

Email and attendance at our meetings

There is increased participation.

I was able to attend this meeting BECAUSE of remote participation.

Hasn't changed much, slightly higher participation.

Email, participation in virtual meetings, etc.

Many people have commented that it's easier for them to attend meetings remotely. everyone went on to zoom and it remained open and informal. it's very important to the meeting dynamic that we can all see each other so we can have an inclusive conversation.

By zoom; on Sustainable Arlington's google group; occasionally through our Facebook page

More public attending!

Mostly email

There has been more public participation

Public participation has grown with the flexibility of remote participation. Our group participation is also more consistent.

Usually via attending the meetings directly, occasionally through sending an email in advance or afterward.

Zoom open dialogue

They register for the zoom ahead of time and join the meeting.

No interaction

Same as above on Zoom

Email

Mostly email, sometimes on Zoom

Same

They have to appear by computer to supplement written applications & answer questions.

During online zoom meetings, applicants are allowed to present materials by sharing screen if they are comfortable doing so, public comment periods allowed, public not automatically muted unless there is a background noise issue, Chair retains right to mute if needed but has not been an issue in our meetings so far.

Via email prior to meetings and joined ZOOM meetings during COVID and participated well.

Pretty much the same, but they have to present their materials remotely.

The public attends the meeting remotely, has an opportunity to speak when invited by the Chairperson.

Emails are sent with presentations to share.

Even though screen sharing takes time, everyone can see the images and plans that are presented during a hearing.

No meetings held during COVID

Group has been on hiatus

Most meetings have 1 or 2 members of the public joining in.

Email, Attending the Remote Meetings, using the Chat feature in Zoom

Similarly: i.e. can email ahead of the meeting, can participate via zoom during open comment time.

Similar to before Covid - we have a community participation period where the public can speak for up to 3 minutes. At times, currently, the public will place comments in the chat but we generally do not respond per our policy.

Feedback during community input has been very cordial, and managed via the Zoom chat. Easy.

Via Zoom meeting attendance

Remote meetings allows the public to participate more easily (as and when the situation demands participation)

Attending meetings, signing up to speak, or sending emails beforehand; but I also feel there is a different sense of how individuals show up that zoom is seen as a different setting - just reflecting on meetings in which members were behaving in a manner that I don't think would have happened the same way had the meeting been in person.

To the best of my recollection, only committee members attended meetings during Covid.

Members of the public have attended our meetings via Zoom. They also email us and sometimes comment on our Facebook page.

I believe the public sends emails to the rainbow commission email account that the co-chairs have access to

During our meetings

Attended meetings, sent emails

Emailing and attending zoom.

Easier access, ability to "drop in" or be off screen

No. We had 1 person attend one remote meeting in May or June of 2020 because they were interested to see what it was like and because it was easy for them to attend remotely. They only listened and did not make any comments or ever attend again.

Not much. Maybe one or two folks have watched the meetings via Zoom

Can attend Zoom, personal contacts.

A friend and neighbor, who is also on a town commission alerted me to an issue regarding the library's website. I referred her to the library director and assistant library director.

The same, not very much

The same public comment period, "community time" is on every agenda so the public has the same opportunity either virtually or in person to share their thoughts. Additionally, typical lines of communication to library staff also remain open and filter to the Board when appropriate.

No

Input on LRPC matters is typically provided directly to members (representatives of Select Board, School Committee, Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee)

At the meetings themselves. A few emails were FW'd to committee members by Town staff.

We have had almost no during Covid-19

A few emails

Zoom call

Only once when we held a public meeting about the OSRP separate from our usual committee meeting mostly through email

Sometimes participated remotely which has increased numbers.

Zoom

We have had great response at our meetings. The public participation has been surprising successful. We've definitely seen some increased participation on Zoom and hope that carries over to when we meet in person again.

Email or remote participation

No real difference except doing so remotely

Log in to Zoom

There have been a few referrals to the committee from the Select Board, and that is when the committee has members of the public attending.

Very limited public attendance at meetings during Covid period.

We have only met a few times. And we have received no input from anyone.

Presentations have been more difficult and taken longer without the use of physical large format plans. Also difficult for the board members to review physical materials samples. Public comment period has been moderated by the chair during each meeting.

Though teams

Informally

no

Sent emails (but not very many)

Email or during public participation portion.

Emails, public participation via Zoom webinar, raise hand feature.

Zoom has made participation more formal.

The same way

Everyone seems to be using Zoom with no difficulty. We have more people attending over Zoom just to observe than we did when meeting only in person, although we don't know how many of them were watching the live ACMi broadcast before and switched to Zoom.

Signing in to the meeting

We've had one meeting during the pandemic (no meeting in 2020). At that meeting, proponents of warrant articles under review interacted via Zoom. We were all using the same written materials and had reviewed them in advance of the meeting.

It was a small group and I would rate the interaction as well executed with a good bit of listening and give and take. Just my opinion.

Same as before the pandemic, but more people are definitely attending our virtual meetings.

Many attend the meeting and sometimes they ask to be called upon during the meeting but often wait until the end of the meeting to speak

Via 'chat' function in Zoom, raised hand in Zoom, or sometimes interrupt and speak out.

See above

No significant changes.

Via Zoom

Virtual meetings have brought improved attendance by members and by the public.

Usually just speaking up or we will solicit feedback the non-committee members attending

We are on Zoom, so anyone can mute or un-mute themselves. For the most part, it has worked, but we have had some people speak outside of the appropriate time.

Comments generally come in the form of email, or testimony during comment periods. I feel that remote meetings tended to increase the amount of public participation.

Public and participants called in on Zoom and could screen share.

Additional Comments about Participation

The Internet has been invaluable for the Town to conduct business, deliver services, and communicate with the public throughout the pandemic. Remote participation has been a necessity to allow boards and committees to continue to meet as well. However, mixing of remote and in-person participation presents some human challenges I hope this Committee takes into consideration. From meeting etiquette, to feelings of who has the advantage due to how they participate, there is a lot to think about and I hope this Committee looks at these issues along with the technicals and potential policy implications. Good luck!

While we invite the public to participate, if past trends are any indication, we probably will have little to none in the future regardless of format.

I would hope that the public feels equally welcome in remote meetings.

I think hybrid or virtual meetings offer a lot of value on topics or for Commissions where there is great public interest in attending. For example, I really appreciate APS and the School Committee offering remote participation and have attended more of those meetings remotely than I did in person.

The virtual option has made participation easier for many.

Arlington's great strength is the size, expertise, and commitment of its resident volunteers. Their input should be considered with care and not necessarily subsumed by consultant findings.

My sense is that having remote meetings hasn't increased or decreased the amount of public participation. As a commissioner, I like seeing people in person, but going out in winter and dealing with transportation issues are both problematic for many of commissioners.

I think from my responses that remote works better for individuals with disabilities. I do think we could have a retreat in person for connection and community.

Remote participation will give the disabled commissioners and general public greater opportunities for participation

Commission members with disabilities will be allowed to participate fully if their disability prevents them from being physically present due to flair-ups, weather conditions or transportation issues. They are still participating and up to date on Commission business.

It's unlikely that that we will do hybrid meetings. If members of the public can't utilize remote technology, we will likely have in-person-only meetings as necessary/desirable. Volume of participation would benefit by allowing folks who might have trouble getting to an in-person meeting location.

Remote participation has made it much easier for the public to participate, and has increased participation.

Before COVID-19, I found public participation onerous. In fact, I once was forced to sit through 2.5 hours at a Select Board hearing on a hard bench at Town Hall after supposedly being granted a reasonable accommodation to present on my warrant earlier in the evening--an ADA violation. By the time I presented, I was so ill I could barely stand and the ordeal left me mostly home-bound the rest of the week. I also recall a wheelchair user who had terrible trouble shortly before COVID accessing the SB room when she wanted to testify during public comment on something critical for her. It's obvious town officials have a slippery grasp of disability etiquette or really, just the law. Under the ADA, Town committees and commissions must offer reasonable accommodations for access to their meetings. Prior to COVID, Towns like Arlington could claim they could not offer remote options because it was "unreasonable." However, COVID showed that when abled people face similar/the same barriers as the disabled, they are willing and able to adapt quickly. This reality indicates that

the prior refusal to offer remote options to disabled people who needed it was a form of discrimination. Post-COVID, denying a disabled person remote access to a committee/commission meeting they request as a reasonable accommodation is a violation of the ADA and has the potential for legal repercussions (i.e., a lawsuit). If hybrid options cannot be offered, then the meetings where reasonable accommodations for remote access are requested should be offered 100% remote as there is no arguing that cannot be done (since it's what we've been doing the past 1.5 year). This is what I have been informed my disability lawyers I have consulted and interviewed.
<https://digboston.com/municipalities-need-to-keep-virtual-access-in-a-post-pandemic-world/>

Active and remote participation is THE reason I am able to attend DTG, Select Board, etc.

Thanks for your work on this. I have seen so much more resident engagement in meetings and personally have been able to attend multiple meetings per evening and have attended meetings I wouldn't have attended in person as I was too busy, bad weather, family obligations. I also know that people with physical disabilities that make attending meetings difficult have been very enthusiastic about remote access.

I really miss in-person meetings in terms of the personal interaction. I don't miss the time spent driving back and forth, finding parking, and getting into the building. People comment that they can make our meeting because it's on zoom; they wouldn't be able to if they had to come in person.

No

Participation is better with remote.

I have observed that pre-Covid, we tended to see participation from a cohort of folks who attended multiple meetings each week. After an initial bump in participation at Zoom meetings, we now see a new cohort (often in addition to the former cohort) that attends multiple meetings each week. Both of these cohorts are always welcome to participate. I would also love to hear recommendations on how to encourage those residents who are typically not engaged in meetings of boards and committees to try out a meeting.

The remote option made it possible for busy people to participate who otherwise would not have.

The FinCom meetings are open to the public. There are often openings to join the FinCom. The meeting room is served by an elevator. The FinCom Report to Town Meeting is available on paper to Town Meeting Members and is available on the Town's website.

Town Meeting works very poorly with remote participation. Our FinCom meetings worked but were cumbersome.

It's easier to understand people in person.

Public participation was more limited & more difficult by remote- many do not have the technology or skill to operate via computer - computer skill should NOT be a requirement to attend & participate in a public meeting.

Public participation is important to the issues before the Commission, it should be facilitated.

Feel that it is easier to get public interest and input on ZOOM - only have heard positive input from people as secretary to AHDC.

The remote meetings for me have actually allowed me to participate even when I am out of town.

Now we probably will continue to have hybrid meetings since some of our committee have compromised immunity even though they are vaccinated they are cautious. I don't know how long this will be necessary. We assume that this may be the same issue for the public.

Thank you for soliciting our input!

It shall allow community members to participate without needing to be present physically. I do think there is a difference in how folks show up to meetings, because they are in the comfort of their own space. I try to encourage attendees to show up as if they would if it were an in-person meeting.

Very low priority for public participation via hybrid, unless the committee is completely renovated to have more of a public role

I hope that we can generate more public participation with targeted outreach and a thoughtful inclusion strategy so that all residents feel welcome to participate.

No - It has been consistently low to non-existent for our meeting

I would welcome public comments during the "Community Time" portion of the agenda. If an individual or a group has an issue that would take longer than the allotted time to present, they would be informed that they can make a request to put it on the agenda as a separate item apart from the Community Time slot.

From my perspective, the public participation levels have not changed for the library with a move to remote meetings. It has typically been and still is very infrequent.

no

I doubt that the interest is there. And I'm afraid the cost will be especially difficult for the Planning Dept which does the work.

The committee members like meeting remotely for the most part. However, we are in the process of updating the Open Space and Recreation Plan, and it would be helpful to be able to have an in-person public meeting at some point to get feedback on the plan in progress. In June we had a Zoom forum, and another is scheduled for mid-November, possibly another in January. Is there a target date for switching to in-person meetings?

The Town's staff responded valiantly to the needs of Arlington's extensive committee community in the face of the pandemic. We are truly grateful for all their hard work!

I have enjoyed the convenience of remote meeting from home since we meet every 2 weeks. However, I miss our "in-person" commission discussions.

Other than posting a zoom address in the call to meeting that we send to Town Hall, I can't think of anything.

I fully support public input by email but making public participation during meetings more convenient may mean there will be more of it, lengthening meetings and negatively impacting recruiting volunteers to serve on committees

People participating remotely should be required to use their camera.

No

Just to note that the Select Board is a bit of a special case in that we have more technology support for hybrid meetings than most town bodies via ACMI, but that is because we have a formal chamber with desks, microphones and multiple cameras.

No

After, as before, people turn out to participate when something is going on that they care about. So the best ways to grow participation may have to do with organizing and sharing information, more than technology.

Remote access has made it easier for more people to participate.

Clearly public participation is up at all town meetings. We ask tree Comm members to attend other committee meetings that are doing things of interest to the tree committee ie ZBA, ARB, ConCom, sometimes Select Board and this would be hard to do without the remote option.

The chat option on zoom is very helpful.

No

Zoom meetings allowed for greater attendance for working parents

None at this time. While we enjoy public participation in our meetings, we are not a commission and don't discuss large projects that would be undertaken by a group like the Parks and Rec Commission. Members of the public who attend meetings do so because they want to help out and ultimately join the committee.

It is important that we are able to record the proceedings to generate minutes. This requires that we can hear everyone whether they are in person or online.

I believe public participation was more efficient during remote participation - better prepared.

Changes Respondents Would Like to See

It would be good if we could have hybrid meetings. I'm concerned attendance will drop when we go back to in-person

Will probably encourage all members to participate in person

Since we never met in-person I don't really know.

I would like to ensure that remote participation is possible to make it as easy as possible for committee members and members of the public to attend

Hard to answer because we didn't meet in person.

If some could participate remotely that would be helpful. Remote participation can help with attendance

To the extent that there will still be some Covid protocols in place, we should ensure that there is good ventilation and that capacity limits are considered

I find it easier to attend remote meetings than in person meetings, due to my other work commitments.

I think having a remote option is always good.

A larger room properly equipped for a hybrid meeting with adequate technical support.

Yes. Our meeting room has no facilities for recording, no good facilities for sharing project plans and PowerPoint presentations, poor physical set up for commissioners and the public in terms of desks and chairs. We need additional support/upgrades to make our in-person meetings as easy to share information as our virtual meetings

We're open to suggestions.

Air purifiers in the meeting room

NA, as we've disbanded. For other committees, I'd like to see more-timely and more thorough posting of minutes.

It would be important that our future in person meetings are held in a completely accessible location. Make it more accessible: make sure the back door (by the HP spot) is open until at least 5pm; make sure it's accessible to those who are deaf hearing impaired with technology and/or ASL interpreter; have good signage to the room in large type and braille. Have the option to meet on Zoom if it's snowing or icing.

Better meeting space to accommodate wheel chairs, hearing assistance devices guide dogs
Following ADA requirements re: hybrid participation

N/A

It is possible that because of the nature of the Diversity Task Group that we might not have to abide by Open Meeting Law, and if we don't there is a good chance that we would continue to meet remotely unless the hybrid meeting technology is extremely transparent.

I would hope that the meeting will not commence in person unless/until they are totally equipped for remote options for those who need/want it.

Ventilation -- I have qualms about Town meeting spaces with a lot of people in them.

Keep zoom while f2f occurs, so people can dial in from home.

I know this is somewhat subject to state regulation, but I would prefer not to have to meet in-person again. Our committee seems to function well enough in an online-only mode, and it keeps everyone in an equal status when we are all online.

More flexibility to schedule ad hoc meetings and meetings with shorter notice and still be able to have full public participation. The flexibility in scheduling that remote opens up is helpful.

Hybrid option for meetings.

If I had my way, we'd be able to meet 100% remote most of the time.

NO. The system we had worked well.

Hold presenters and comments to allotted time duration.

Have our meetings in person unless there is a medical necessity for someone not remote participation during Covid made it difficult and often unpleasant for meetings to appear in public.

Need to think hard about how meaningful remote public participation can be maintained if meetings are in-person. There is also a similar concern about Commissioner participation since some members may feel uncomfortable attending indoor, non-socially distanced meetings.

Air filtration system in building

I'd prefer to stay remote.

Works great remotely

Yes include remote options. Include a mechanism to share materials electronically

Yes, I will continue to use some of the protocols that we have been using for Zoom meetings. They make managing the meeting easier.

More flexible days/times for participants

I would like to see the committee (perhaps all public boards and committees) adopt some values and guidelines around civil discourse and productive use of meeting time to encourage productive, civil discussion, to keep meetings on topic and to discourage unnecessary conflict and uncivil exchanges.

Meetings of this committee have frequently been effectively hijacked by one appointee who seeds conflict rather than solutions, makes unwarranted ad hominem attacks, seeks to undermine the credibility of those who disagree with them, and seems not to support the mandate of the committee.

While respectful disagreement should be encouraged, these uncivil tactics undermine the effectiveness of the committee, obstruct productive dialogue, discourage participation by others and reflect poorly on the Town. This has been the case before and since COVID-19. I'd like to see the Town adopt guidelines for civil participation that support a more productive and respectful forum for public discourse.

Other than offering a remote option, none.

I would like to allow passive involvement by people watching from home. But if they wish to speak, they need to attend in person.

I would rather not meet in person again. I prefer Zoom.

I'd like to be on Zoom.

The overwhelming concern should be to make participation easier for people.

I would like to see more effort to not overlap meetings, and potentially survey to see if the set times we have always had are still the best time to meet- especially if we are hoping to engage the public more.

Perhaps putting meetings on the town calendar (the meeting dates were on the committee's web page)

I would like to see the option for attendance via Zoom to continue for both commissioners and members of the public. Given our current configuration, I think that all Commissioners would prefer to meet in person, but that may not always be the case, and sometimes when things are super busy, the option to attend via Zoom would be great.

Well ventilated space with enough room to spread out

Ability to use facilities that will support hybrid meetings.

Consistent location

Allowing people to join remotely provides more flexibility for Board members and the public to participate. This flexibility could result in a larger pool of future board members as well as more public participation.

Yes. Full participation in a hybrid setting

Making it easier to have remote public participation.

To keep the option to attend remotely. Especially as a parent of a young child it can be difficult to attend in person. This can open the door for more residents to be involved in boards and/or to attend meetings as a member of the public.

All members really should arrive on time. Really.

Given the number of committee members and town staff who attend, and the early hour of meetings (8 am), I would like to see if the LRPC can conduct its meetings in a hybrid format if the remote meeting option expires in April, 2022.

No -- we meet in Town Hall so will follow the mask rule if needed.

Maybe alternate in person with remote meetings. Always allow someone to dial in if they can't make the meeting

The senior center was a challenge to meet in before their renovation - one room was too small and the other too big. It would be nice to have comfortable furniture as our meetings can be long!

Continue to allow remote if possible.

Would be helpful to have an expanded list of rooms for meetings throughout Town Hall and other public buildings. Some meeting rooms are very small and would get crowded easily, so the larger rooms may be more popular to keep social distancing as needed. Having a better idea of the larger rooms that can also accommodate large public attendance is important.

No, the PTBC's meetings have been efficient and effective both In the pre-covid and covid periods

Greater engagement

No, but again remote meetings have been a game-changer in terms of ability to schedule and hold meetings

For the full school committee, we will need to adjust policies pertaining to public participation at committee meetings.

No changes from our two successful hybrid experiences. We'll keep doing that.

No, let's get back to in person meetings

Yes, we could use some new members!

Try to make the remote and the in-person experiences as similar as possible.

Yes, add remote.

Only that we would welcome a hybrid option.

A remote option

I would like to have documents electronically ahead of time so they could be displayed on a screen for everyone to see.

I hope we could do more projection of meeting materials.

Yes - stay remote if one wishes to

Concerns about Hybrid

However, mixing of remote and in-person participation presents some human challenges I hope this Committee takes into consideration. From meeting etiquette, to feelings of who has the advantage due to how they participate, there is a lot to think about and I hope this Committee looks at these issues along with the technicals and potential. Depending on how wide-scale hybrid meetings would be, I would be concerned about the cost and administrative burden on staff. Loss of in-person connection and how that impacts public participation.

I don't have concerns. I support it.

Ensuring that a board member - whether attending in-person or via remote - can hear and see the person from the public who is speaking

None

Keeping the two parts (remote and in the meeting room) coordinated is tricky. My church has had some success with a DTEN system, which costs ~\$4k.

None

Less flexibility for board members and less community engagement when we resume in person meetings

I do not have any

I think fully live or fully remote would work equally well. Hybrid meetings would be OK, but I think less desirable as remote participation is more difficult than live.

None

Need to create uniform experience for all, so those participating remotely don't feel sidelined.

n/a - it would be helpful to have transcription on Zoom platform

Logistics, technology

I am somewhat concerned that the mics/speakers/technology will not be up to par and we end up with a frustrating experience for both boards and the public.

Difficult to hold a zoom meeting with several people in person - but aside from the technology aspect I think a hybrid approach is a good idea.

Bad idea - keep it entirely remote

My general sense is that hybrid works well if remote participants are listen/view only. It gets much more complicated if you want to enable remote participants to also be able to speak. The additional setup time and complexity doesn't seem like it would be worth it, once Covid restrictions lifted.

I don't have experience with hybrid meetings but wonder if the acoustics will be as good as when all are remote.

It's my understanding that it's difficult for the meeting leader to do both remote and in person at the same time.

Managing both in person and remote participants.

Complicates interactions

I don't have any, but I think this complete count committee's work is finished.

None. I think we should always offer this as an option

In my experience hybrid meetings are more difficult than either entirely remote or in person. We don't have a dedicated town staff member that could run the virtual part of the hybrid meeting while our town Agent and volunteer chair run the in-person meeting.

Always a potential for unwanted comments or zoom bombing

We haven't addressed that yet.

Less comfortable for in-person attendees.

See above: that some of them, as is the current practice with Select Board meetings, will make the public invisible and not even enable the Participants function. It's not a public meeting if the members of the public cannot be identified. The risk that we'll see something inappropriate should not outweigh the right of all attendees to know who else is in the meeting, and even be able to communicate with them via private chat, just as you could whisper something to someone in person.

I do not have a concern regarding our particular commission.

Because most of the commissioners have disabilities, learning how to conduct a meeting with even more things to keep track of (i.e. in person interactions and Zoom interactions) could be challenging. Keeping up with new ways to meet is tiring. We have had a lot of churn/changes in personnel, and we haven't hit our stride yet in terms of how to run the meetings. We might need to have a non-disabled member of the commission to help with running the meeting.

I think it would be confusing for parties to and would not feel like equal access.

Keep meetings remote

None

N/A

Handling the technology so in-person and remote participation is smooth and seamless. My concerns are the Town will not properly fund it so that hybrid options are inadequate, which will get in the way of access for people who need it to attend the meetings at all. My concern is also that the Town will cherry pick only certain meetings for hybrid, when under law, remote options need to remain viable to disabled folks under the ADA upon request.

None- I'm willing to learn/adapt to include both modes of participation.

Quality of meeting for remote participants (hearing/seeing), ability for remote participants to be recognized to speak.

I hope that virtual participation will remain an option as it is the only way I can participate on a regular basis.

No concerns.

Not much, there will be a bit of a learning curve as we figure out the technology but not concerned. I think the benefits outweigh the challenges.

Hybrid meetings are better than in-person only but can be difficult in terms of uniform sound quality.

(For example, hybrid with phone call in for the Lyons Hearing Room with just one sound pick-up point is poor). Hybrid via screen presence, if possible, would be better than hybrid via phone only. The advantage of zoom is that everyone can hear.

We need more public communication

That there is a level playing field between those in person and those online. Online participants might not hear everything correctly or might not be able to as easily speak-up. If there is an online chat component, in-person participants might be excluded from that.

I have no concerns other than the greater likelihood of spreading virus

My concern would be equal participation for remote and in person attendees.

Audio issues and prioritization of who participates when. We have had some informal meetings using hybrid participation and our main problems have been with sharing presented materials, the ability of remote participants to hear the in-person participants (and vice versa), and making sure remote participants feel included in the meeting. I also am curious about which meetings would be required to be hybrid, who would manage the technology, and proposals for how to manage competition for rooms where hybrid technology has been enabled among our many boards, committees, and task groups.

None

Spread of illness. Making sure that technical aspects of managing a dual meeting do not override the in-person meeting. Concern on the ability to be able to take minutes and manage the technical/in person aspects of the meeting.

As previously stated, not real public participation

Such meetings, if many people attended would be impossible to manage. FinCom discussions get into the workings of Town government. To make informed recommendations to Town Meeting FinCom members have to take the time to become informed themselves.

Might make the control of the meeting more difficult.

There would not be an easy way to respond to remote attendees and in-person attendees. Remote observing would work, but participation would be cumbersome

Hard to review plans and materials, judge reactions of parties or neighbors.

Very concerned with ability to share information in person (visual aides) and electronically at the same time. Prior to remote meetings, physical, large format copies of plans were typically provided to serve as the basis of discussion. Not sure how this would be done in hybrid mode without in room cameras and screen projection.

That all materials be required to be "Zoomable" so that the public can see and study

That a Commission member be assigned to monitor Zoom during meetings, in order to allow in the public during course of meeting and in order to recognize questions. (some committees let this slip and the public participation suffers. It needs to be monitored actively.)

It is very difficult for presenters to do a good job with both in-person & remote audiences; its a very problematic mix

Public and Commissioner access.

The presentations will not be seen correctly by the parties (need large screen) also will need to manage the meeting more closely to make sure everyone gets their say.

Capacity and reliability of WiFi where your meeting is held because all Commissioners would have to also connect with a computer at the meeting.

I think it might be fine to have hybrid meetings if we can have the right equipment.

Not sure if we have tech capacity

None

Difficult to monitor both live in room reactions and what is happening on zoom.

Since I work in a school, I've been a part of this kind of interaction - it is very difficult to manage and make sure that those who are remote are recognized and can easily participate. The problem is getting a whole room of people to be visible and be able to see the Zoom people. Hybrid is may be worse than all-Zoom.

Communication between people in the room and those on the phone and tech issues.

I have lots of them. Hybrid doesn't work well. The worst of both worlds in my view. Either have them in person or stick with Zoom. The half in/half out is challenging and unsatisfying.

Being able to accommodate remote attendees.

Guidelines would need to be established and followed. My concern is folks being in two (or more) places at once- remotely I have had commissioners be on multiple zooms in different meetings because of overlapping times. This would not happen in person. You would need to decide which is best for you to be at and attend it and be fully present.

Hybrid meetings generally require a technology investment and training. It's not so much a concern as something that would have to be done.

I think it would be challenging for some people with disabilities and people for whom English is not their primary language, and there needs to be thoughtful consideration of how to best be inclusive. I'm happy to provide some guidance or help. My contact information is included with my responses to this survey.

Having the necessary technology to facilitate a good meeting experience for all.

Technology so that there's a consistent experience for both live and remote attendance/participation.

My concerns would be the technical and interpersonal administration required for hybrid meetings. The meeting room would need to have the appropriate equipment to support hybrid meetings and we would need training to manage it. Additionally, it would be more challenging to moderate a hybrid model with people in a room and people on zoom or some other platform without effective technology and training.

Making sure that people can still access the meetings remotely no matter where they are.

Dealing with the technology involved could be distracting and possibly time consuming for library staff assigned the responsibility. This could slow our deliberations. I have seen what has happened in recent years, in both real and virtual Select Board meetings when large groups deliberately hijack a meeting with endless and repetitive comments by multiple people. Whether or not it was their intent, their actions served to disrupt the necessary business of the Select Board and appeared to be harassment, rather than simple expressions of opinion. In the many years I have been on the board, I have found

that there is little apparent interest from the public in attending library board meetings. The issues dealt with in trustees' meetings tend not to be controversial.

It takes practice and attention on the facilitator and all board members part to learn how to actively engage with those who are attending virtually. May require some investments in technology and equipment to make the meetings work well.

none

Ensuring that those participating remotely would not feel sidelined

A core group of supporters or opponents could swamp the virtual meeting

Scheduling & operating the equipment & the related cost. If members of the public don't have compatible video equipment, then they should be willing to use the phone.

Don't know how it would work

Those remote have a hard time engaging

Less human connection. Slight increase in uncompromising using attitudes.

Tech issues

There is the possibility that those people participating remotely will feel less engaged than those attending in person.

Remote meetings seem to be much better with time.

Meetings end in a timely manner and seem to be just as successful as in person. Although I feel not being in a room with my fellow commissioners is not as productive from a conversation point of view. The dialog between the Commissioners and attendees is really important and would be problematic if it is a hybrid set up.