

## Annual Town Meeting query

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Dear Mayor and Town Council

The Bulletin says "The 86th Annual Washington Grove Town Meeting will be held **IN-PERSON** at McCathran Hall on Saturday May 14, 2022. **Masking and social distancing will be encouraged.**

What provision is being made for residents who are not comfortable with meeting in large groups in a closed hall regardless of vaccination status or masks or social distancing (which will be difficult in the Hall if the usual number of residents show up)?

It is clear from recent Washington Post articles that "Nearly two-thirds of the people who died during the omicron surge were 75 and older, according to a Post analysis, compared with a third during the delta wave. Seniors are overwhelmingly vaccinated, but vaccines are less effective and their potency wanes over time in older age groups." (Saturday April 30, 2022 page A6). As you know, the demographic in Washington Grove skews older.

This issue will be an on-going one. Some form of hybrid in-person/virtual meeting ought to be available going forward. Even if Covid becomes a non-issue in the future, it's been obvious that attendance at many of the Town meetings has benefitted from the opportunity to participate virtually. The increased ease of access has encouraged all residents (including the younger ones!) to attend more regularly. To return to solely in-person meetings would probably reverse that positive trend. And to go back to meetings in the Council chamber where interested residents were forced to stand if the limited seating filled up is an even greater step in the wrong direction.

We look forward to hearing what the Town government plans to do about access to Town meetings, especially the rapidly approaching Annual Town Meeting.

Sincerely yours,  
Georgette Cole and Ernie Kawasaki