

OLD COLONY MEMORIAL

Put it to a vote: signatures now certified to review town government

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PLYMOUTH – The impossible dream might just become a reality. The Plymouth Charter Transition Committee now has the signatures it needs to get a petition placed on the town ballot in May so voters can consider changing the way local government operates.

A recent campaign to get voter support netted some 9,200 resident signatures, said Wrestling Brewster, PCTC chair and a Town Meeting representative. He stated that Town Clerk Pearl Sears has certified the 7,100 names required to put a petition on the ballot.

“I was just informed we have enough signatures,” Brewster said in an email on Monday.

The commission wants Plymouth to take a close look at its current form of government and consider what other options might be viable. If approved, the ballot question would result in the formation of a new charter commission to do just that. The town has formed commissions in the past to review changing local government.

“Right now, we have a representative form of town government that meets twice a year,” Brewster said in an interview. “We don’t think that’s a good choice for a town the size of Plymouth. We have issues that need to be checked daily. Plymouth needs a government that meets on a regular basis.”

A new charter commission would review the choices and make a recommendation to the Select Board in two years. That proposal would then be put to a vote on another town ballot for residents to decide if they want to keep town government the way it is or if they want to change to something else.

“People have told us they don’t want a mayor, but that’s just one of the possibilities,” Brewster said. “There are other options, like a town council, to consider.”

Obtaining those necessary signatures seemed like an unreachable star for PCTC a year ago. Members were having a difficult time getting residents to sign on with the idea of taking another look at changing town government.

“There was a point last year where I was really discouraged,” Brewster said. “We weren’t even close.”

However, the group hired a petition-drive management firm to collect voter signatures, which was active throughout the fall. The company was able to garner the required names in time to meet the Feb. 1 deadline for getting the petition on the town ballot.

“Now the real work begins,” Brewster said. “We have to switch gears and get people to say yes.”

Concurrent on the ballot will be a list of candidates to serve on the charter commission. Now that the signatures have been certified, interested residents will soon begin declaring their interest in running for election to the five-member panel that will review town government options for Plymouth.

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