

Letter to the Editor

Resident upset over actions of moderator

To the editor:

Article 3 11.1 of the town's bylaw states the following:

11.1 Any registered voter or taxpayer of the Town shall, subject to such rules as may from time to time be established, have a right to speak, but not to vote, at Town Meeting sessions.

At Town Meeting on Jan. 28, 2008, the town moderator expressed his opinion to hear discussions from the appropriate board(s), Town Meeting members, and then residents in attendance on Warrant Article 4.

At the conclusion of discussion from the Town Meeting members, the moderator stated he would entertain a motion to close discussion on the article. I interrupted the moderator to ask why he was not entertain discussions from residents in attendance when he clearly stated he would, and he stated that discussions were closed and he was "sorry."

I reiterated that he has specifically expressed the intention to hear discussions from the residents in attendance. He then requested a vote of the meeting members to reopen discussions so residents could be heard.

The vote was favorable. His tone of voice indicated to me that he was reluctant to do so.

This is the second occurrence of this incident against me personally by this same moderator. Other residents (including Town Meeting members) have also experienced this from the moderator, when wishing to express their opinion(s), which they are entitled to per the above arti-

As a resident of Burlington for 21 years, this action on the part of the moderator is totally unacceptable,

and I consider it to be abrupt, unconscionable, an intimidation of the general public-at-large, and an infringement on my right to free speech per Article 11.1 above.

I was sitting in plain view of the moderator, and he had no problem acknowledging speakers at the back of the auditorium. He was well aware, as I had raised my hand twice, indicating that I wished to offer an opinion on the article, but he totally ignored my request (and all other residents of the audience) to speak.

The moderator may hold the position of a vice president of a bank, but that position does not entitle him to attempt to impose his will or influence on "any and all" town residents.

I have spoken with other town residents who have experienced the same lack of consideration from the moderator, as well as other individual(s) of various town boards and committees. I cannot and will not sit idly by and allow the continuance of this lack of consideration for the residents of Burlington, who are the taxpayers.

It is their hard-earned dollars that have to pay the bills created by the current and previous town administrations and developers. A written apology to the town's residents in the two newspapers, and on BCAT during the moderator's weekly news analysis would be most appreciated.

Paul LeClair