

As most of you understand, the RTM has potential for more power than the public perceives. It offers Darien residents a real opportunity to participate in leading the town forward. Our members gain so much insight into how the town works and how it can be improved.

In addition to being responsible for approving the Town's finances, ordinances and operations in general, the RTM offers a forum for sharing information about current issues.

Darien is currently confronting several matters related to use of its limited land resources. Examples are the library site, Allen-O'Neill, and Weed Beach. At our March meeting, the Affordable Housing Advisory Commission made a presentation about strategies for supporting affordable housing development. In June, we will have a special meeting to consider the acquisition of the library's property on LeRoy Avenue.

As demographics shift, balancing the needs and wants of a diverse population within the boundaries of fiscal prudence is always our single biggest issue. Our challenge is to try to take the long view towards maximizing benefits for the town.

The RTM as an entity is relatively unknown. One reason is that it is an unusual organization. There are fewer than 10 in the State of Connecticut. Few residents are aware of the RTM's existence, much less how easily they can be elected and kick-start their participation in local civic affairs.

We are an active, hard-working body, but there are still a few empty seats. We have a continuing need for new members. People volunteer in many ways all over town. But they don't always think of volunteering in our government.

You can all help. You might be able to take a turn yourself on the RTM. Or, you might encourage a friend or neighbor to run for a seat. It doesn't have to be a lifetime commitment. We need a steady flow of individuals with common sense, preferably without personal agenda. Other than that there are no special qualifications or prerequisites required. One can learn on the job.

As the League says, "Government is not a spectator sport."

