

TOWN MEETING

Town Meeting is a community event for all ages. It provides citizens with a way to involve themselves in caring for their community. Workshop methods used include a serious look at the needs of the community and the development of practical proposals that give a focus to the future of the town. At the close of the Town Meeting, each participant receives a copy of the work done during the meeting.

HISTORY OF THE PROGRAM

In recent years there has been a growing desire among concerned citizens to help promote community spirit. "Town Meeting" was developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs in response to requests to engage a broad range of citizens in caring for their communities. "Town Meeting '76" was an Horizons program endorsed by the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration. The program has continued with the encouragement of Town Meeting participants themselves. Over 4,000 Town Meetings have now been held in North America and over 500 in other nations. Plans for the immediate future include holding town meetings in five or six communities within a county followed by a county-wide assembly.

THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

The Institute of Cultural Affairs is an international group of volunteers concerned with responsible citizen involvement in human development in communities. It designs practical programs for use in local communities as well as for a wide variety of social and business organizations.

The ICA is incorporated in the state of Illinois as a not-for-profit, tax-deductible corporation. It began as a program division of the Ecumenical Institute: Chicago twenty years ago and was independently chartered in 1973. The two continue to function as separate but related organizations with regional offices across the United States. The programs of the Institute are assisted by both the public and private sectors in the form of grants and in-kind contributions.

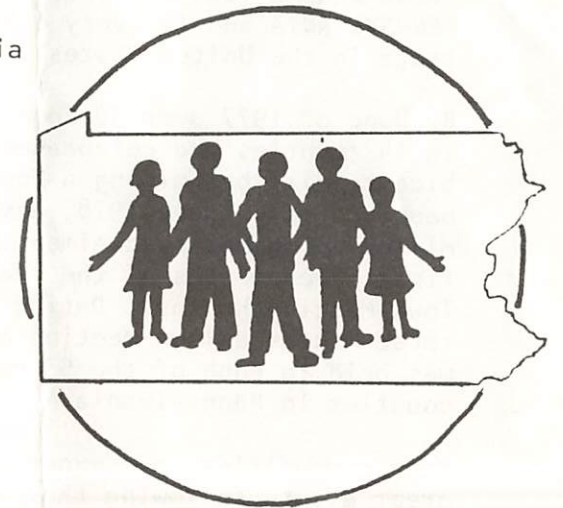
The Institute of Cultural Affairs
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TOWN MEETINGS in PENNSYLVANIA REPORT

*"...these Town Meetings are...the first
opportunity in years for citizens to meet
...and plan their future."*

Milton J. Shapp, Governor
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



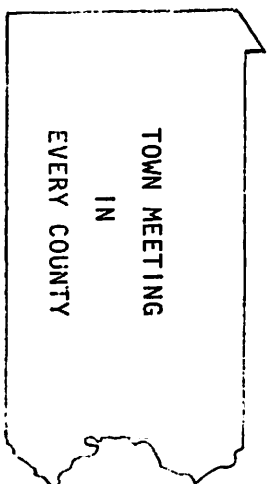
A REPORT TO THE CITIZENS OF PENNSYLVANIA

Prepared by the Institute of Cultural Affairs

June, 1978

Bendersville*Elderton*Philadelphia*Georgetown*Everett*Hamburg*Altoona*Sayre*Pittsburgh*Valencia*Ebensburg*Emporium*Weissport*Snowshoe*Phoenixville*Knox*Clearfield* Jackson Township*Lewisburg*Grand Valley Area*Lakeview Area*Belleville*Lansdale*Wissahickon Valley*Barrett Township*Danville*Walnutport*Duncannon*Burgetts Town*

side*Liberty Five*Williamsport*Selinsgrove*Pottsville*Town Meeting*Town Meeting*Town Meeting



At least one community in every county in Pennsylvania has held a Town Meeting during the past two and a half years.

Pennsylvania hosted the very first Town Meeting which was the kick off for the Town Meeting '76 program. This was a nationwide bicentennial event held across the USA. By popular demand this event became TOWN MEETINGS in PENNSYLVANIA and in every other state in the United States.

By June of 1977 over 30 communities in 14 counties had celebrated the bicentennial by holding a Town Meeting. In January 1978, Governor Milton J. Shapp, proclaimed the first three months of the year as Town Meeting Months. During these three months a Town Meeting event was held in each of the 53 remaining counties in Pennsylvania.

Many communities have experienced great events following their Town Meetings. Reports of happenings from Pennsylvania communities indicate excitement, new projects, and increased participation.

PENNSYLVANIA COMMUNITIES EXPERIENCE NEW LIFE

*After a spring '77 Town Meeting several workdays in the downtown area have resulted in a new look for UNION CITY in Erie County. This Northwestern Pennsylvania community has also formed a Concerned Citizens' Committee whose members are active in regularly attending council and municipal meetings. The logo designed at the meeting is now displayed at entrances to the Borough.

*In LIBERTY FIVE (a section of Pittsburgh), the Chamber of Commerce did much to get the 1976 Town Meeting off the ground. A proposal for street lights was carried out shortly after the Town Meeting. Another proposal was for a Sidewalk Festival to aid the business section. The day was a huge success. Health and social service agencies had booths and displays. The bloodmobile had its most successful day. The Chamber of Commerce reports that the fall of '77 saw a repeat of this LIBERTY FIVE event.

*A 600 member historical society formed in PHOENIXVILLE in Chester County after the Town Meeting.

*One class at Huntingdon County's JUNIATA COLLEGE held a Town Meeting for itself in March. After their Town Meeting they organized and held a second successful Town Meeting for the entire college community.

*MEEHOOPANY in Wyoming County organized a follow-up Town Meeting which resulted in a well-supported community cleanup day.

*Two projects which had been languishing in Northampton County's WALNUTPORT sprang to life after the Town Meeting. There is now a new shopping center open and new sewers have been installed. Citizens of WALNUTPORT report a reduction in youthful vandalism.

*SOUTHWEST CENTER CITY - PHILADELPHIA has a group which has been meeting regularly since their Town Meeting two years ago. They publish a monthly newsletter and just held a Health Fair.

*A 'civic council' was proposed in DUNCANNON in Perry County. Several meetings have been held.

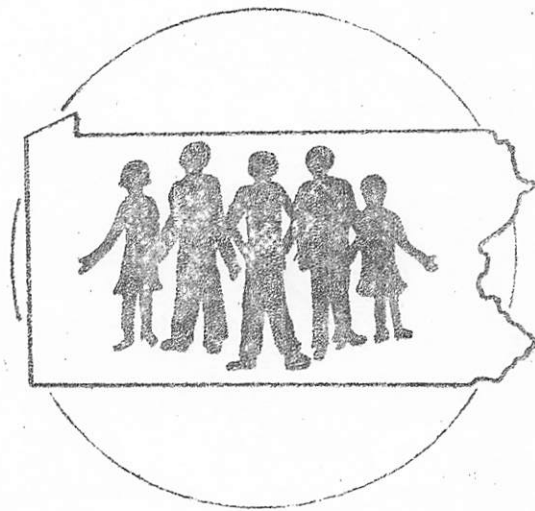
*Youth participation in the MATAMORAS Town Meeting in Pike County was a key happening for that community.

*Participation in all aspects of the life of GREAT BEND in Susquehanna County increased after their Town Meeting. People have seen their neighbors participating in town gatherings and projects and have begun to participate more actively themselves. A new park is being built this summer by the citizens.

*BUCKHORN in Columbia County also reports that attendance has definitely picked up at town functions.

Northampton*Easton*East*Harrisburg*York*Lebanon*Reading*Scranton*Wilkes-Barre*Pottsville*Shavertown*Williamsport*Hamilton*Ulysses*Pottsville*Selinsgrove*Berlin*Dushore*Great Bend*Polk*Shavertown*Williamsport*Hamilton*Ulysses*Pottsville*Selinsgrove*Berlin*Dushore*Great Bend*Polk*

Town Meetings



in
Pennsylvania

TOWN MEETING
A Community Service Program of the
Institute of Cultural Affairs

"Town Meeting is a community workshop event sponsored and organized by local citizens in consultation with the Institute of Cultural Affairs. The program provides an opportunity for a cross section of a community to identify the key issues that face their community's future and to determine practical ways they can begin to solve those issues. The meeting can be planned as a day or evening event, and is open to all ages and segments of the community.

Over 1800 communities and neighborhoods have participated in Town Meetings across the United States. The Town Meeting program was created by the ICA and introduced nationwide as part of the Horizons section of the Bicentennial celebration (American Revolution Bicentennial Administration). The ICA provides consultant services, workshop materials, and volunteer staff to coordinate the activities of the Town Meeting event.

The community's work is printed on the day of the Town Meeting and is distributed to each participant during the final reporting session. Recorded in the document are the brief, definitive statements on the key issues, the practical proposals, a song, a story, a symbol created by the community, and a listing of names and addresses of those in attendance. The document serves both as a record of the day's deliberations and as a guide for future action.

A Town Meeting Assembly is held as a regional event soon after the local Town Meetings have taken place. The Assembly provides a forum for local Town Meeting representatives to share their common concerns, and to experience methods for implementing the practical proposals developed in the Town Meetings.

Important qualities appear as a result of the Town Meeting. Civic pride and community spirit are generated through common effort in a meaningful endeavor. Cooperation is built among the individuals and groups that participate in the event. The fact that people have shared their concerns and together identified a fresh vision of their community's future inspires a new sense of hope and encourages citizens to respond in a practical way.

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TOWN MEETINGS IN PENNSYLVANIA

This is a partial listing of sponsors and contributors to Town Meetings held previously in Pennsylvania. It represents contributions of money, time, services, and materials. For more information, please call the Pennsylvania offices of the Institute of Cultural Affairs: (215) 662-1877 and (412) 231-8131

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

December, 1977

Dear Fellow Citizen,

Government cannot--and should not--do everything. We, the citizens, can do much for ourselves. It is a matter of getting ourselves together, identify the problems that most of us are concerned about and then map out the ways to deal with them---through citizen action with, as needed, government assisting the people.

I hope you, your family, friends and neighbors, will attend the Town Meeting in your area. It is a real opportunity to bring your community together in much the same way that early Americans met in town meetings to make decisions about what was going to happen.

We could sure use a renewal of the spirit and vitality of our forefathers in bringing back the days when citizens worked as a team to improve the community. Don't let government be the answer to our problems. The growth of government has made it remote from citizens and caused the decrease of citizen involvement in community life.

Bringing together citizens in your area Town Meeting will have probably the same effect it has had in other towns---citizen interest dramatically increased, community spirit came alive, things got done and people learned a real lesson about what they can do as a team.

So what are you doing that's more important than this? I hope everyone will take several hours from the daily routine and attend the area Town Meeting. You will enjoy yourself and you can make a real contribution to your community by participating. After all, if you do not attend, it means other citizens will be making the decisions without you.

Town Meetings are a good way to start America's Third Century! I hope you will attend.

Yours sincerely,
A handwritten signature of Stephen R. Reed in dark ink.

STEPHEN R. REED
State Representative