

TOWN OF BRIDGEWATER

OFFICE OF THE TOWN MANAGER

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POLICY FOR CANDIDATES SEEKING NOMINATION SIGNATURES ON TOWN PROPERTY

Date: February 1, 2016

From: Michael Dutton, Town Manager

Purpose: The following policy is designed to give guidance to Department Heads, and candidates seeking nominating signatures concerning the appropriate places to request signatures, and the inappropriate places and methods used to collect signatures. The Policy is designed to make it easy for candidates, but to preserve the necessary work environment for Town employees. It is also designed to maintain the safety of both candidates and Town employees by restricting the places candidates may solicit signatures.

Policy to Allow Candidates to solicit signatures for nomination papers on municipal property:

All candidates for public office are allowed to solicit signatures for nomination papers throughout Bridgewater including the following places on municipal property;

- 1.) Outside municipal buildings and on municipally owned grounds including parking lots, recreational fields and sidewalks provided that the flow of foot and vehicle traffic is not impeded, and;
- 2.) In the "common areas" of municipal buildings providing there is no interference with employees' work or business being conducted.

Candidates shall not be permitted to solicit signatures in non-public areas (including private offices, restrooms, or areas off limits to the public). Nor shall candidates be permitted to interfere with Town operations or intimidate or harass the public in the process of soliciting signatures. **Under no circumstances may employees engage in any political activity during work hours or in Town buildings.**

Additional areas off limits to candidates are the Highway Barn or offices, Police or Fire Stations, the Water or Sewer facilities, and the Recreation Offices. Candidates are allowed solicit in the library, Memorial Building lobby, Town Hall lobby, Senior Center (large room), and Transfer Station as long as they are not obstructing the course of business. However, Department Heads may reasonably ask candidates to cease their solicitations if, in the sole discretion of the Department Head, the candidate is interfering in any way with the regular course of business, or if the candidate, in the sole discretion of the Department Head, is harassing the public. If a Department Head notes an infraction of the policy, he/she will tell the candidate to desist and, if the candidate does not comply, will instruct the candidate to leave the building.

Additional Information: "Soliciting of Signatures in Public Places," William Galvin, Secretary of the Commonwealth, March, 2002. (A copy is available in the Town Clerk's Office); Town Charter Section 9-2(4); Personnel Handbook Section 428. Political Activity and 414, Solicitations.