

**TOWN OF ACTON  
SELECTMEN'S MEETING  
NOVEMBER 14, 2006**

**1. PUBLIC FORUM:** Jim noted that in response to a letter in the New York Times by Richard L. Hasen, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles who wrote

*“AS election mishaps hindered voting on Tuesday from Cleveland to Denver, some people were already calling for giving up on the new electronic voting machines, which were themselves put in place to prevent another hanging-chad fiasco like that in Florida in 2000.*

*But this reaction to the bugs and glitches shows that Americans have not learned the right lesson from 2000: the problem is not with the technology of running our elections but rather with the people running them”----- Sheila Parks of West Roxbury, Ma., wrote about the vote counting in Acton, Maine. Over the last several months, I have observed five hand-counted paper ballots (HCPB) elections: three in Massachusetts, one in Vermont and one in Maine. Richard Hasen (November 11, 2006) dismisses the need for hand-counted paper ballots in our elections. I completely disagree with him. Although HCPB do not address the egregious suppression of the vote, coupling the elimination of this suppression with HCPB is the only way we will have fair, honest, open, transparent and clean elections. All five hand-countings of the paper ballots were conducted smoothly, without any hassles and were finished in a timely manner. With a long ballot, it took counters about two hours to hand-count approximately 1000 ballots. In Acton, Maine, last week on November 7, I observed six teams of two counters each, hand-count paper ballots. Each team was made up of a Republican and a Democrat. Not only did each team hand-count the paper ballots, but also they immediately audited the hand-count. That is, first one member of the team said out loud the winner of the contest or in the cases of a referendum, said yes or no, while the other member of the team in red pen or pencil, tallied the count on a summary page. The ballots were counted in batches of 50. Then, immediately after the first hand-count of the paper ballots, a second hand-count was done of this same batch of 50 ballots, by these same counters. This time, the person who had read the ballots out loud did the tallying and the person who had tallied read out loud the ballot choices. If the totals did not match, they had to recount to find the errors. In four hours, the teams of hand-counters had counted and audited 944 long ballots. Before the counting began, the Town Clerk, Jennifer Roux, opened each absentee ballot, read out loud the person's name, and placed the ballot in the ballot box, while the person's name was checked off in the ballot book. The conducting and supervision of the election was superbly done by Roux, as was the hand-counting by the hand-counters.*

**2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING:**

**4. WARRANT:**

**5. OLD BUSINESS:**

- (A) ASSESSING:**
- (B) CABLE CONTRACT:**

**6. NEW BUSINESS:**

**(A) APPOINTMENTS - SACO RIVER CORRIDOR COMMISSION (1 MEMBER, 1 ALTERNATE) BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW MEMBER:**

**(B) SIGN ESCROW ACCOUNT**

**(C)**

**7. ADJOURNMENT:**

**8. MEETINGS:**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

**OTHERS PRESENT:**