

Warrant Article Questionnaire
Citizen Petitions Articles

Article # 33	Date Form Completed: 03/18/2021
Article Title: Town Meeting Member Removal/Recall Study Committee	
Sponsor Name: Kathryn M. Coughlin	Email: Kathryn.coughlin@gmail.com

Question	Question
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it is intended to be voted on by the Finance Committee.
Response	To see if the Town will establish a committee of up to seven (7) citizens appointed by the Moderator, to examine the grounds for, procedure, and/or process to remove or recall a Town Meeting member, the preparation of a report and recommendation for a future Town Meeting, or otherwise act thereon.
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the required Motion?
Response	To see if the Town will establish a committee of up to seven individuals appointed by the Moderator, to examine the grounds for, procedure, and/or process to remove or recall a Town Meeting member, the preparation of a report and recommendation for a future Town Meeting, or otherwise act thereon.
3	What does the sponsor gain from a positive action by Town Meeting on the motion?
Response	The sponsor does not now or nor will have in the future, an equity interest.
4	Describe with some specificity how the sponsor envisions how: the benefits will be realized; the problem will be solved; the community at large will gain value in the outcome through the accompanied motion?
Response	<p>At present, there are no provisions in the town's Bylaws or Charter to remove or recall a town meeting member, except perhaps by the quite expensive town-wide recall election. Article 3-1 (h)(1) "Recall, Application" provides, "With the exception of town meeting members . . . any person who holds an elected town office, with more than six months remaining of the term of office, may be recalled from office by the voters . . .".</p> <p>Earlier this year, there had been discussions in social media forums by Natick residents asking whether the Town had the power to remove a town meeting member. Presumably, this question had not arisen previously. The warrant article seeks to see if the town would establish</p>

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	a committee to examine the grounds for, procedure, and/or process to remove or recall a Town Meeting member or whether this is even a good idea.
5	How does the proposed motion (and implementation) fit with the relevant Town Bylaws, financial and capital plan, comprehensive plan, and community values as well as relevant state laws and regulations
Response	The proposed motion calls for a study committee and as such, has no impact on the Town's Bylaws, financial or capital plan, comprehensive plan, or community values, and no impact on state laws or regulations.
6	Have you considered and assessed, qualified and quantified the various impacts to the community such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Town infrastructure (traffic, parking, etc.) ● Neighbors (noise, traffic, etc.); ● Environment and green issues (energy conservation, pollution, trash, encouraging walking and biking, etc.);
Response	Not relevant to this motion.
7	Who are the critical participants in executing the effort envisioned by the article motion? To this point what efforts have been made to involve those participants who may be accountable, responsible, consulted or just advised/informed on the impacts of executing the motion?
Response	The Town Moderator may be a critical participant, and the Article sponsor has consulted with him prior to submitting the Article to the Town Clerk.
8	What steps and communication has the sponsor attempted to assure that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Interested parties were notified in a timely way and had a chance to participate in the process, that ● Appropriate town Boards & Committees were consulted ● Required public hearings were held
Response	Not applicable for this warrant article.

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9	Why is it required for the Town of Natick AND for the sponsor(s)?
Response	On January 6, an armed insurrection took place in Washington, DC. A current Natick town meeting member, essentially an elected legislator, was present in the Capitol, which the Federal Bureau of Investigation has determined was an illegal act. That town meeting member has since been arrested and is awaiting trial. The sponsor, and other Natick residents, would like to determine the grounds for (if any) and the process by which a town meeting member may be removed. At the time of this incident, there was a groundswell of anger and embarrassment for the town. The sponsor would like to avoid personalization of this question—i.e., to look at this question with all of its legal implications (due process, legal grounds, potential infringement of freedom of speech or other constitutional rights) and determine whether the Town needs a means by which to remove an elected town meeting member, short of a town-wide recall.
10	Since submitting the article petition have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	No.
11	What are other towns and communities in the Metro West area, or the Commonwealth of MA doing similar to what your motion seeks to accomplish
Response	No known actions. The sponsor has been trying to identify towns and communities in Massachusetts that may have a similar provision.
12	If this Warrant Article is not approved by Town Meeting what are the consequences to the Town and to the sponsor(s)? Please be specific on both financial and other consequences.
Response	There are no foreseeable financial or other consequences.