

Warrant Article Questionnaire Citizen Petitions Articles

Section III – Questions with Response Boxes – To Be Completed By Petition Sponsor

Article # 22	Date Form Completed: 9/6/2021
Article Title: South Natick Dam Mitigation Alternatives	
Sponsor Name: Brad Peterson	Email: brad.peterson@macromicro.com

Question	Question
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it is intended to be voted on by the Finance Committee.
Response	<p>To see if the Town will vote to fund an investigation into feasible alternative mitigation solutions for South Natick dam non-compliance, beyond the two specifically proposed (removal of trees on earthen dam with riprap enforcement on shoreline, or breach of spillway).</p> <p>To engage qualified third-parties, such as a Landscape Architecture firm with experience in redesign of Prominent Public Parks to work in conjunction with a Civil Engineering firm to manage process.</p>
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the required Motion?
Response	<p>The site of the South Natick dam and associated Public Park is of unique scenic and historical importance. Any change is of great interest to many in Natick and surrounding areas.</p> <p>The current Town administered process to address dam non-compliance appears to be broad, with significant civic community engagement, and an extensive process of Advisory Committees. This is to be applauded. The process, however, is flawed, as it proposes only two very specific predetermined options (removal of trees on earthen dam with riprap enforcement on existing shoreline, or breach and removal of the spillway).</p> <p>No comprehensive study has been undertaken to identify all potential options for mitigation of dam issues and their effect on the associated Public Park.</p> <p>It is the opinion of the sponsor (and a number of others), that additional feasible options should be considered as part of the processes, and these options may be superior to those currently proposed. This will result in an improved community recommendation process and ultimately a better outcome for the South Natick dam and Public Park complex.</p> <p>For example, alternatives may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The earthen dam can be back filled on the down-stream side. The earthen dam would cease to be an earthen dam, and would become part of the riverbank. This would not

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	<p>require any tree removal, or beach of the spillway. This would not change the aesthetic nature of the South Natick dam complex in any appreciable way. A small area of protected wetland may have to be addressed, or offset elsewhere, as is routine in civil engineering.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The earthen dam can be front filled on the upstream side. The impoundment area of the Charles river on the upstream side is significant. Fill can be added to this area in sufficient quantity to address the identified issues with the earthen dam. As with previous example, fill can be added to a sufficient extent that the earthen dam is no longer considered an earthen dam, but simply becomes part of the riverbank. This may, for example, result in 20-40 ft or more of new Public Park or wetland on the up stream side of the earthen dam. - The repair of the earthen dam, as proposed by the Town, would require extensive use of man made structural riprap. While this may be cost effective civil engineering solution to strengthening shorelines, it is esthetically unpleasing and more appropriate for the side of a highway than in a uniquely historic, significantly scenic Public Park such as the South Natick Dam. Other solutions such as a continuation of the masonry wall used extensively throughout either side of the historic spillway on the up stream side of the earthen dam would be more appropriate and consistent with the existing Public Park complex. - A combination of the above, or other alternatives <p>These above are not “pie in the sky” alternatives, but entirely feasible and plausibly superior to the two specifically prescribed options from the Town sanctioned process to date.</p> <p>The process of option identification has been entirely lacking and has not included any involvement from professional groups typically involved in creation or redevelopment of Public Parks, or from interested members of the public.</p> <p>Ideally the process of solution identification should be managed by a qualified third party. Given the scenic and historical importance of the South Natick dam complex, any changes should be managed in a process that would be used to alter a prominent Public Park.</p> <p>The process should involve a Landscape / Civic Park Architecture Group, to oversee collection of Community use, and aspirations for a redesign of the Park complex that include mitigation of dam non-compliance, and work in conjunction with a qualified Civil Engineering firm to then generate a selection of options for consideration by the wider community.</p>
3	What does the sponsor gain from a positive action by Town Meeting on the motion?

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Response	The sponsor will benefit as a resident of Natick from an improved selection and recommendation process.
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>It is the opinion of sponsor, that the two currently proposed options are both unsatisfactory as they will permanently alter a uniquely historic and scenic area of Natick. It is the opinion of the sponsor, that other options may be superior to the two currently proposed by the Town and should be appropriately studied and included for consideration as viable options. It is the opinion of the sponsor that the process should be overseen by a qualified third-party such as a Landscape Architecture Firm with experience in Public Park redesign.</p> <p>The community will gain from a superior process and outcome for the South Natick dam and associated Park.</p>
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	Town Meeting has the authority to fund the proposed investigation.
6	<p>Have you considered and assessed, qualified and quantified the various impacts to the community such as:</p> <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	Study into alternative options will consider the above.
7	Who are the critical participants in executing the effort envisioned by the article motion?

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	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	Town Selectmen, Town Administrator, Town Engineer, Advisory Committee. The sponsor has participated in public sessions hosted by the Advisory Committee and provided opinion that has become part of public record. The sponsor has exchanged emails with Town Engineer. The Sponsor has reached out to Town Administrator. The sponsor has discussed with Parks and Recreation Advisory sub-committee.
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	The warrant article process is public, and all meetings are publicly posted by the Town.
9	Why is it required for the Town of Natick AND for the sponsor(s)?
Response	To set aside funds, to engage a qualified third-party to investigate all potential mitigation solutions for issues identified with the South Natick Dam, not only the two specifically proposed, and for all identified solutions to be considered for consideration by the community at large and the Advisory Committees for cumulative recommendation to the selectmen.
10	Since submitting the article petition have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	No

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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	Not Applicable
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	The town may permanently alter a uniquely historic and scenic Public Park in Natick, with an inferior design, simply for expediency, lack of imagination and consideration of alternative solutions.