

Warrant Article Questionnaire Citizen Petitions Articles

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

Article # 31	Date Form Completed: September 17, 2021
Article Title: Hoop I District Near West Natick Commuter Rail	
Sponsor Name: George Richards	Email: grichards@southnaticklaw.com

Question	Question
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it is intended to be voted on by the Finance Committee.
Response	Move to amend the Town of Natick Zoning Map and Bylaws by including in a Housing Overlay Option Plan I (HOOP – I) overlay district the land known as 247 West Central Street and shown on Natick Assessors as Lot 58A on Map 40.
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the required Motion?
Response	To allow for a denser residential project near the West Natick Train Station than is currently allowed in the Limited Commercial (LC) District and to provide 20% affordable housing to help the Town maintain its affordable housing stock at greater than 10%.
3	What does the sponsor gain from a positive action by Town Meeting on the motion?
Response	To allow Sponsor's client to develop the property at 247 West Central Street in a manner consistent with "smart growth" principles and to provide additional affordable housing for the town.
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	The benefits will be realized by providing more market rate AND affordable units at a time when housing is at a premium. There is no "problem" being solved (other than a shortage of housing) and the community at large will benefit from increased tax base and obtaining more affordable housing for our community.
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 planners have been discussing redevelopment of the West Central Street Limit Commercial District for some time on ways to increase housing near the train station and to encourage more redevelopment in the area and to promote development of under utilized sites. This parcel is ideal for housing due to its location near the train station and the ability of the owner to create a "pocket park" at the corner of West Central and Boden Streets.

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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	<p>The infrastructure is in place (with more than enough parking on site underneath the new building) and traffic from housing should be less intense than the current retail shop and training facility. There are no residential neighbors nearby and the ability of residents to walk to the train station is an environmental benefit that is also consistent with "smart growth" principles and the Commonwealth's efforts to create more housing near public transportation.</p>
7	<p>Who are the critical participants in executing the effort envisioned by the article motion?</p> <p>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?</p>
Response	<p>The owner has been in talks with the town planning departments for some time and originally hoped to pursue this project by way of the existing "inclusionary zoning" bylaw but it was determined that the density under that bylaw was insufficient and would result in an under utilized site/project. In general, town planners have been very supportive of more housing density in this area and have encouraged the owner to pursue this type of project.</p>
8	<p>What steps and communication has the sponsor attempted to assure that:</p> <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	<p>See response to Question # 7 above. As part of the public hearing process, we will be appearing before the Finance Committee on September 28th and before the Planning Board on October 13th when we hope to have public support of the article and to get the support of both the Finance Committee and the Planning Board.</p>

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9	Why is it required for the Town of Natick AND for the sponsor(s)?
Response	This is a win-win proposal for both the Town and the sponsor's client as explained above.
10	Since submitting the article petition have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	Not yet.
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	The Commonwealth and all towns in the area are trying to find ways of encouraging an increase in their market value AND affordable housing stock so this is consistent with those efforts both locally and state wide.
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	This site will most likely never be redeveloped into housing under the existing bylaws as the economics do not support developing an under-utilized site so the current use and tax revenue will continue to be limited as currently is.

2021 Fall Town Meeting Warrant

ARTICLE 31

Hoop I District Near West Natick Commuter Rail

PROPOSED MOTION

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