

Warrant Article Questionnaire Non-Standard Town Agency Articles

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

Article # 25	Date Form Completed: 03.24.2022
Article Title: Cluster Development Allowed in Certain Districts	
Sponsor Name: Planning Board	Email: aloomis@natickma.org

Question	Question
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it will appear in the Finance Committee Recommendation Book and presented to Town Meeting for action.
Response	To see if the Town will vote to enact a moratorium from accepting new applications under Section III-F (Cluster Development Allowed in Certain Districts) Zoning Bylaw from the date of legal notification (March 2, 2022) of this article for 1 year thereafter, to allow the Planning Board time to review and revise the bylaw and its application for a future Town Meeting; or otherwise act thereon.
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is the proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the accompanying Motion?
Response	<p>Over the past several years, Town Meeting has received multiple requests to amend Section III-F of the Natick Zoning Bylaw. In addition to the Planning Board receiving several special permit applications under Section III-F of the Natick Zoning Bylaw.</p> <p>With each review, different challenges present themselves, preventing applicants and the Planning Board from reviewing a project that meets the expectations of the community and neighborhood. The proposed moratorium intends to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a holistic review of the Residential Cluster Development Bylaw and sections impacted by or impact Section III-F of the Natick Zoning Bylaw. • Conduct a review of the various provisions for affordable housing and the allowed density bonuses. • Identify a method to preserve open space and natural features. • Identify a transparent and efficient process while setting specific procedures and expectations for application submittal and review. • Preparation of a density calculation or submittal of a proof plan that will yield an appropriate number of units in a project. The number of units should be competitive with a conventional subdivision and fits the scale of a neighborhood. • Identify an appropriate density bonus that creates a project that benefits all parties.
3	Has this article or one of a very similar scope and substance been on a previous Warrant Article and what have been the actions taken by the Finance Committee, other Boards or Committees and Town Meeting?

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Response	Warrant Period Ex: 2021 SATM	Other Committees Ex: Planning Bd refer	FinCom Action Ex: Referral	Town Meeting Ex: Referral
	Fall Town Meeting, 10.28.2021, Article 28A	Favorable Action	Favorable Action, 14-0-0	Vote to approve
	Fall Town Meeting 10.20.2020, Article 11	Favorable Action, 5- 0-0	Favorable Action, 12-0-0	Vote to approve
	Fall Town Meeting 10.16.2018, Article 32	Favorable Action	Motion D - Favorable Action, 8-2-2	Vote to approve
	Fall Town Meeting 10.17.2017, Article 52			
4	Why is it required for the Town of Natick and for the Town Agency sponsor(s)?			
Response	Over the past several months, the Town has received a series of Special Permit Residential Cluster Development applications. All of which have identified needed amendments to the existing Section III.F Zoning Bylaw. Rather than continue to amend pieces of the Bylaw, the Planning Board recommends a comprehensive that will review and update the cluster bylaw.			
5	Does this article require funding, how much, from what source of funds and under whose authority will the appropriation be managed and spent?			
Response	Funding is not required for Article 25. All work associated with the review and amendment of Section III-F and applicable sections can be done by staff, the Planning Board, and volunteers.			
6	Does this article act in any way in concert with, in support of, or to extend any prior action of Natick Town Meeting, Massachusetts General Laws or CMR's or other such legislation or actions? Does this article seek to amend, rescind or otherwise change any prior action of Natick Town Meeting?			
Response	The request for a moratorium complies with the Attorney General's requirements for a moratorium to be no more than two years, identify the problem the moratorium intends to address, and a resolution to fixing the issue.			
7	How does the proposed motion (and implementation) fit with the relevant Town Bylaws, financial and capital plan, comprehensive Master Plan, and community values as well as relevant state laws and regulations?			
Response	Massachusetts General Law (MGL) allows for the implementation of the cluster development to preserve open space. Cluster development is defined in MGL c. 40A, Section 9.			

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8	Who are the critical participants in executing the effort envisioned by the article motion?
Response	Members of staff responsible for reviewing Special Permit Residential Cluster Development applications and members of the Planning Board and the Conservation Commission.
9	<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 ● Appropriate Town Boards & Committees were consulted ● Required public hearings were held
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Legal ad for the March 16th public hearing was published in the Metro West Daily Newspaper on February 25th and March 4th ● Legal mailers were send to the abutting communities and required parties of interest prior to March 4th ● Public hearings for Article 23 were held on March 16th and March 23rd
10	Since submitting the article have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	No issues have been identified since the submittal of the request. The Planning Board requested that the date of the appearance of the first legal ad be included in the motion, which was March 2, 2022.
11	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	Suppose the Town chooses not to take action on the Article. In that case, the Town may continue to get cluster development applications that do not meet the Town's expectations, the scale of the neighborhood, all while remaining attractive to the development community through an inefficient review process.