

# Warrant Article Questionnaire Citizen Petitions Articles

Article #27	Date Form Completed: 09/17/2022
Article Title: Survey and Roadway Layout Plan for Pinewood and Hillcrest Avenues	
Sponsor Name: Elizabeth Eichfeld	Email: ElizabethEichfeld@gmail.com

Question	Question
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it is intended to be voted on by the Finance Committee.
Response	<p>Move that the Town vote to appropriate from free cash, the sum of \$22,700 to be expended as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under the direction of the Department of Public Works, for the purpose of surveying and developing roadway layout plans of Pinewood and Hillcrest Avenues, thereby enabling the furtherance of the street acceptance process.</li> </ul>
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the required Motion?
Response	Surveying the road and developing a layout plan is the next required step in the street acceptance process for Pinewood & Hillcrest Avenues. This article seeks to secure Town funding for the survey and layout plans.
3	What does the sponsor gain from a positive action by Town Meeting on the motion?
Response	The Sponsor gains funding for the survey and layout plans, thereby enabling her neighborhood to apply for street acceptance. Upon acceptance, the Sponsor and her neighbors will enjoy the benefits of living on a public roadway in Natick, including eventual infrastructure improvement.
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>Pinewood and Hillcrest Avenues' roadways are crumbling. Their Pavement Condition Indices (PCI) are 13 and 10 out of 100, respectively. The average PCI of Natick roads is 67. Any score under 40 indicates the road has failed and full reconstruction is necessary.</p> <p>A map of our streets is included for reference. (See document titled "Pinewood_Hillcrest_Ave_Map".)</p>

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	<p>As evidenced by the petition of 26 households, the neighborhood wants to gain street acceptance, so that eventually, our streets (as well as water, sewer, and storm drain systems) may qualify for capital improvement by the DPW. Our petition is attached for reference. (See document titled "Pinewood_Hillcrest_Acceptance_Petition".)</p> <p>Ours is an old neighborhood, far predating the streamlined street acceptance process laid out in 2017. We do not have a central homeowners association by which to raise funds. The poor infrastructure conditions directly affect 33 abutting households in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Unsafe pavement conditions on a steep hill present injury risk for children and adults who use the road for recreation and fitness</li><li>- Rough road conditions damage or shorten the lifespan of vehicles</li><li>- Decreased home values</li><li>- 3 water main breaks in fewer than 10 years</li></ul> <p>If this article were approved by Town Meeting, our neighborhood would be closer to mitigating those issues.</p> <p>The next step in the street acceptance application process is to have a street survey executed and roadway layout plans drawn up for submission to the Registry of Deeds, in order that the Selectboard may review them. The Sponsor collected three quotes for this work, the lowest of which was \$22,700 by DGT Associates, a survey company that has performed similar work for the Town in the past. That quote is included, as is a second comparative quote. (See documents titled "DGT Associates Estimate" and "Brennan Consulting Estimate".)</p> <p>The Sponsor then polled the neighborhood. After collecting more than a dozen families' responses, it became clear that a grassroots effort to collect \$900 per household for the layout plan was an insurmountable obstacle for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- \$900 is an impossible contribution for some households on our streets due to fixed incomes or large expenses, such as college tuition.</li><li>- There is no guarantee of street acceptance, even if the residents were to be able to fund the survey.</li><li>- There is no guaranteed timeline for infrastructure improvements, even if acceptance is gained. Some residents may leave the neighborhood before realizing the benefit of their investment.</li></ul> <p>Therefore, via this article and motion, the Sponsor requests that the Town fund the survey and roadway layout plans, so that we may move forward with the next step in applying for street acceptance.</p>
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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	<p>The street acceptance process for Natick can be found in the attachment, which is derived from MGL c. 82 Sections 17 through 32. (See document named "Private Way Acceptance Process_5-1-17".)</p> <p>It is clear from the attachment and previous Selectboard discussions on this topic that the next step in the street acceptance process for these roads is the development and submission of roadway layout plans. Recently, the Town covered the cost of these plans for several roads in the Fiske Street neighborhood in order that they would gain street acceptance. By that precedent, Article 27 fits within the spirit of the process in Natick. The \$22,700 cost would be covered by the Town's free cash.</p> <p>When it comes to "community values", Natick's unaccepted streets have been a pain point for residents for many years. The Sponsor has heard Selectboard members, DPW Staff, and residents express their desire for the same common goal: to get these old, dilapidated roads accepted so they may eventually be improved to a reasonable standard. The intent of Article 27 is to further that goal.</p>
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"> <li>• Town infrastructure (traffic, parking, etc.)</li> <li>• Neighbors (noise, traffic, etc.);</li> <li>• Environment and green issues (energy conservation, pollution, trash, encouraging walking and biking, etc.);</li> </ul>
Response	<p>The survey and development of roadway layout plans would have no impact the residents of Pinewood and Hillcrest Avenues.</p> <p>Restoration of the road would allow residents and the nearby community to safely utilize the roads for recreation and passageway. The eventual repavement of these roads would relieve the DPW of repeated maintenance.</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>

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Response	The Director of the DPW and his staff will be the most critical participants in executing the survey. The Sponsor has met twice with Mr. Jeremy Marsette on this topic, once with Mr. Paul Joseph also in attendance. Additional email exchanges have furthered the Sponsor's understanding of the street acceptance process.
8	<p>What steps and communication has the sponsor attempted to assure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interested parties were notified in a timely way and had a chance to participate in the process, that</li> <li>• Appropriate town Boards &amp; Committees were consulted</li> <li>• Required public hearings were held</li> </ul>
Response	<p>The Selectboard has discussed the street acceptance process multiple times in the past 16 months, notably on July 14, 2021, after the Sponsor submitted a petition for street acceptance, and on February 23, 2022, during which the signing of damage waivers was discussed.</p> <p>Director Marsette's memo regarding our street acceptance petition is attached. (See document titled "Pinewood_Hillcrest_Acceptance_Memo_7-9-12".)</p> <p>Additionally, the Sponsor discussed this topic for one hour with Director Marsette on November 12, 2021, and again for an hour with Director Marsette and Chairman Joseph on May 25, 2022. Detailed notes from these meetings can be provided upon request.</p> <p>During the May 25<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Sponsor, Mr. Marsette, and Mr. Joseph discussed next steps, one of which was the Sponsor exploring a Town Meeting article to fund the survey.</p> <p>Additionally, the Sponsor sends regular progress updates via email to her neighbors, the signatories of the street acceptance petition.</p>
9	Why is it required for the Town of Natick AND for the sponsor(s)?
Response	<p>What little intact asphalt is left on our streets is steadily degrading each winter. While the DPW patches the potholes, the patches are not enough to maintain the integrity of the pavement. The water main, sewer, and storm drain systems may be of similar, though unknown, condition (as evidenced by the 3 prior water main breaks). Waiting to act will allow the infrastructure to degrade further, inviting more risk of injuries or large emergent repairs.</p> <p>Other solutions to the funding dilemma have been discussed. Two such ideas are 1) implementing a central "developers fund" to pay for the work and 2) applying a betterment to the residents' taxes to pay for the survey and roadway layout plans. Due to the lengthy list of the Town's other priorities, neither of these options have been intently pursued by Town Officials, to the Sponsor's knowledge, despite several follow-ups. <b>Outside of this Citizen's Petition, the Sponsor has no alternative means to pursue this objective without further action from the Town.</b></p>

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<b>10</b>	Since submitting the article petition have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	No.
<b>11</b>	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 Sponsor's understanding is that the issue of accepting and improving old roads such as Pinewood and Hillcrest is common throughout Massachusetts. The Sponsor is unaware of any town that has found a universal solution that could be applied in this case.
<b>12</b>	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	<p>If this article is not approved, the residents of Pinewood and Hillcrest Avenues will be utterly stuck without a path to street acceptance. Based discussions with her neighbors, the Sponsor has concluded that self-funding the roadway layout plan is not an option at \$900 per household, especially without a guarantee of street acceptance upon completion. The residents will be forced to wait until one of the following events occurs:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Adjoining Farwell Street is deemed ready for repavement, and we get lucky enough to be included in that project, as in the Fiske neighborhood example. Farwell was repaved in the last 10 years and is in very good condition, so that could be decades from now.</li> <li>2) The Selectboard or other Town Official deems it a priority to amend the process or implement a new funding vehicle in a way that enables old roads to gain acceptance. The inaction of the Town to date on this topic suggests that the priority of this issue is insufficient as compared to other matters. There is no way to predict when or whether it will become a priority.</li> </ol>