

Warrant Article Questionnaire Non-Standard Town Agency Articles

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

Article # 20	Date Form Completed: 09.06.2022
Article Title: Moratorium – III-F 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	<p><i>Move that Section III-F of the Natick Zoning Bylaws be amended as follows:</i></p> <p>Following the first paragraph of Section III-F (Cluster Development Allowed in Certain Districts), insert a new paragraph to read</p> <p><u><i>MORATORIUM – For the purposes of this moratorium, the Town shall not accept any new special permit Residential Cluster Development applications under Section III – F, herein, from the date of August 10, 2022, for 18 months thereafter. Such moratorium is intended to allow the Planning Board time to review and revise Section III-F in its entirety, and associated sections for a future Town meeting.</i></u></p>
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>Article 25 the 2022 STM, was approved by Town Meeting and submitted to the Attorney General for review and approval, which remains pending. Article 20 for FTM has been submitted as a place holder for the Attorney General recommendations and amendments.</p> <p>Background from the STM of 2022: 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. 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.

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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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4	Why is it required for the Town of Natick and for the Town Agency sponsor(s)?																											
Response	Article 20 is a placeholder for any required action requested by the Attorney General for Article 25 of the STM of 2022. Background of STM 2022, Article 25, includes: Over the past several months, the Town has received a series of Special Permit Residential Cluster Development applications. All of these 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 20. Article 20 of FTM 2022, is to provide as a place holder for STM of 2022, Article 25 action. STM of 2022, 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.																											

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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.
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	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 Appropriate Town Boards & Committees were consulted Required public hearings were held
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal ad for the September 21st public hearing will be published in the Metro West Daily Newspaper on September 7th and September 14th Legal mailers will be sent to the abutting communities and required parties of interest prior to September 7th Public hearings for Article 21 will commence on September 21st
10	Since submitting the article have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	Issues associated with Article 20 have not been identified since the submittal of this request.
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	The response is the same as Article 25 of STM 2022, pending the Attorney General's Review. 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 and the scale of the neighborhood, all while remaining attractive to the development community through an inefficient review process.