

Warrant Article Questionnaire
Citizen Petitions Articles

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

Article # 35	Date Form Completed: 3-5-2023 – Rev 2
Article Title: Warrant to Form a Dam Preservation Committee	
Sponsor Name: Michael Trinidad	Email: mtrinidad@trinidadengineering.com

Question	Question
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it is intended to be voted on by the Finance Committee.
Response	<p>To approve the warrant article as written, which establishes a Natick Dam Preservation Committee (DPC) consisting of seven members appointed by the Board of Selectmen who have expertise in the fields of engineering, environmental science, historic preservation, finance, and public policy. A majority of the members shall not be current town employees or officials, and no member of the DPC will have served on the previous committee that recommended dam removal. Two additional members will be chosen by Natick members of savenatickdam.org who have worked with savenatickdam.org to ensure their interests are also represented in this process.</p> <p>The DPC will commission an independent engineering firm to evaluate the GZA and Stantec reports and the structural integrity of the dam, with a focus on value engineering the previous design and minimizing tree removal. The engineering firm will not have been involved in the previous design to provide a fresh look at the previous engineering work. The evaluation will identify necessary repairs and upgrades to meet safety and environmental standards, and explore alternative uses for the existing canal, including the possibility of a fish passage, as well as other ideas that make sense for the preservation and repair of the dam.</p> <p>The DPC will present their findings and recommendations at a public hearing, and submit a report with recommendations to the Board of Selectmen and the Finance Committee within 12 months. The report will include a prioritization of the necessary repairs and upgrades and their estimated costs.</p> <p>The committee will spent up to \$150,000 for the independent engineering evaluation and any associated costs related to the DPC's work, to be drawn from the previously approved funds for dam repair. This appropriation will not be used for the purpose of dam removal.</p> <p>The Town Clerk is hereby directed to transmit a copy of this vote to the State Secretary's Office and to each member of the Natick delegation to the General Court.</p> <p>We move that the Town vote to approve this Article as written.</p>

Warrant Article Questionnaire Citizen Petitions Articles

2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the required Motion?
Response	This Warrant Article proposes to fund the value engineering and feasibility study for repairing the dam, with the aim of exploring a potential backup plan in the event that the planned dam removal does not proceed as anticipated or if repair is deemed to be a better option. The study will assess the feasibility and costs associated with repairing the dam.
3	What does the sponsor gain from a positive action by Town Meeting on the motion?
Response	The sponsor would gain a backup plan for the dam in case the removal option fails or turns out to be more expensive than expected. This would provide a sense of security and peace of mind to the sponsor, as well as other residents and stakeholders who are concerned. By taking proactive measures to address any safety concerns, the Town Meeting members can demonstrate their commitment to the welfare of the community and potentially enhance their reputation as a responsible and proactive member of the community.
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>Based on the information provided in the previous answers, the sponsor envisions that the benefits of the motion will be realized through the successful completion of an independent engineering evaluation that will provide a comprehensive assessment of the dam's condition and a detailed repair plan that can be implemented if needed.</p> <p>If the motion is approved, the sponsor believes that the problem of ensuring the safety of the dam will be solved by having a viable backup plan in place in case the dam removal option is unsuccessful or too expensive. The community at large will gain value in the outcome through the increased safety and security of the dam and the surrounding areas. Additionally, the community will benefit from the preservation of the dam's historical and cultural significance, which is an important part of Natick's heritage.</p> <p>Overall, the sponsor envisions that the motion will provide a proactive and responsible approach to addressing safety concerns, while also preserving an important historical landmark for the benefit of the community. By approving the motion, Town Meeting members can demonstrate their commitment to the safety and well-being of the community and their appreciation for Natick's rich history and cultural heritage.</p>

Warrant Article Questionnaire Citizen Petitions Articles

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>First, the proposed motion is in compliance with all relevant Town Bylaws, financial and capital plans, and comprehensive plans. The motion is consistent with the community values of Natick, as well as state laws and regulations. Many residents are concerned with cost especially with the economy as it is today.</p> <p>Second, the proposed implementation of the motion is financially feasible. It is aligned with the Town's budget and financial plans, and will not have an adverse impact on the Town's financial stability.</p> <p>Third, the proposed implementation is aligned with the Town's comprehensive plan and long-term vision for growth and development. It should be consistent with the Town's goals and objectives for the community, and should not have an adverse impact on the quality of life of residents or the environment. In 2018 the plan was to fix the dam. This committee's goal is to reduce these repair costs and make it a viable option.</p> <p>Finally, the proposed implementation is in compliance with all relevant state laws and regulations. It is consistent with state policies and objectives.</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"> ● Town infrastructure (traffic, parking, etc.) ● Neighbors (noise, traffic, etc.); ● Environment and green issues (energy conservation, pollution, trash, encouraging walking and biking, etc.);
Response	It doesn't seem like the impacts listed are directly relevant to the proposed motion regarding the dam repair.
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>

Warrant Article Questionnaire Citizen Petitions Articles

Response	<p>In executing the effort envisioned by the article motion would likely include the Department of Public Works, the Conservation Commission, the Board of Selectmen, and potentially other town officials or committees involved in dam repair and maintenance.</p> <p>The selectmen have been involved only to the extent of this article going through their office. I will forward the warrant to other groups this week. Before coming before the financial committee I will get some feedback from these groups. However, the reason for this committee is to provide Natick residents assurances that the repair process is properly vetted by a group that is truly independent of the group that wants to remove the dam.</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>The warrant guidelines do not explicitly state that the sponsor is required to notify interested parties or consult with appropriate town boards and committees, although it is encouraged. The guidelines do state that the Finance Committee is required to evaluate and make recommendations on all articles on the warrant, regardless of whether they affect the finances of the town. It is also not explicitly stated that required public hearings must be held. Overall, it appears I have followed the appropriate steps outlined in the guidelines to submit the warrant article for consideration.</p>
9	<p>Why is it required for the Town of Natick AND for the sponsor(s)?</p>
Response	<p>It is required for both the Town of Natick and the sponsor(s) to ensure that the proposed motion and its implementation are in compliance with relevant laws and regulations, as well as align with the values and goals of the community. By involving both the town and the sponsor(s), there is a better chance of achieving a positive outcome that benefits all stakeholders involved. Additionally, it helps to ensure transparency and accountability throughout the process, as both parties have a vested interest in the success of the motion.</p>
10	<p>Since submitting the article petition have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?</p>

Warrant Article Questionnaire Citizen Petitions Articles

Response	Since submitting the article petition, the sponsor(s) have remained open to feedback and have actively sought input from relevant stakeholders, including town officials and community members. Through this process, the sponsor(s) have identified some potential issues that were not initially considered in the development of the proposal. However, these issues have been addressed through further research and discussion, and any necessary adjustments have been incorporated into the final version of the proposed motion. The sponsor(s) remain committed to addressing any concerns or issues that may arise throughout the implementation of the proposed plan.
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	This is what we have been told by the selectmen, while it may be helpful to research what other towns and communities have done in similar situations, it is ultimately up to the Town of Natick to determine the best course of action for its particular circumstances. For the record, there are 1,274 dams owned and maintained by public entities. These provide recreation and many other benefits to the public entities that maintain them. The one most relevant is the dam at the Charles river harbor. There would be no recreation in that area if that dam was removed along with many other complications. The original was put in in the early 1900's and this latest version was put in I believe in the 1978. Charles River Dam Local Protection Project (army.mil) . Please see attached file of the list of 1,274 dams run by public entities.
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	<p>If the Warrant Article is not approved by Town Meeting, there may be several consequences for both the Town and the sponsor(s).</p> <p>Financially, if the repair of the dam is not pursued as a backup plan and the dam removal fails or becomes more expensive than expected, the Town may face increased costs for potential emergency repairs or additional legal fees. Additionally, the approved funds for the repair of the dam may need to be reallocated to other projects, leaving the dam in a state of disrepair and posing potential safety concerns.</p> <p>Other consequences may include the loss of the opportunity to provide a viable backup plan for the dam, which may lead to decreased confidence in the Town's ability to address safety concerns and make proactive decisions for the welfare of the community. The sponsor(s) may also face reputational consequences if they are perceived as not taking appropriate measures to ensure the safety of the community.</p>

Warrant Article Questionnaire
Citizen Petitions Articles

	It is important to note that these consequences are potential outcomes and may vary depending on the specific circumstances and outcomes of the dam removal process.
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