

Warrant Article Questionnaire Non-Standard Town Agency Articles

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

Article # 16	Date Form Completed: 09.24.2023
Article Title: Amend Zoning Bylaw: Use Regulation (Zoning 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>Warrant Language To see if the Town will vote to amend the Natick Zoning Bylaw by relocating and amending use-related language from individual zoning district sections of the Zoning Bylaw to § III.A.2 (Use Regulation Schedule) with affected sections including but not limited to § III-B Highway Mixed Use-I (HM-I) Districts Use Regulations; § III.D Use Regulations for LC Districts; § III.E Downtown Mixed Use District (DM); § III.EE Center Gateway District; or act in any other manner in relation thereto</p> <p>Motion Language Please see attachment for full motion.</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>The intent of Article 16 is to incorporate all Use Categories in the Use Regulation Schedule. That is not currently the case for several districts. Currently, permitting details for different uses for Highway Mixed Use-I (HM-I), Limited Commercial (LC), and Downtown Mixed Use (DM) zoning districts and some uses for the Center Gateway (CG) Zoning District (for some uses) are located in separate sections of the Zoning Bylaw: III-B, III-D, III-E, and III-EE.</p> <p>Bringing all of the Use Categories and permitting requirements into the Use Regulation Schedule would significantly improve navigability and the user experience.</p>
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?
Response	<p>Below are the amendments to the Highway Mixed-use –I (HM-I) and Center Gateway (CG) Zoning Districts.</p> <p>*Note: Article 16, is building on the efforts of Article 25 of the 2023 Spring Annual Town Meeting to create an up-to-date Use Regulation Schedule, in addition to the efforts associated with Article 15, of the 2023 Fall Town Meeting.</p>

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Section III-B Highway Mixed Use – I (HM –I) Zoning District

- Article 1 of the Special Town meeting No. 1, First Session on March 20, 1979 the Planning Board sponsored an article to create the HM-I Zoning District within the Zoning Bylaw, which included the various uses permitted.
 - February 22, 1979, the Planning Board recommended favorable action on Article 1
 - Town Meeting unanimously approved Article 1
- Article 28 of the Spring Annual Town Meeting on May 2, 2023, the Town Administrator sponsored an article to update Section III-B Highway Mixed Use – I (HM-I) Zoning Bylaw, in addition to Sections 324, 325, and 326, and Section IV-B Intensity Regulations and footnotes
 - Planning Board voted 5-0-0 to recommend favorable action on March 15, 2023
 - Finance Committee voted 11-0-1 to recommend favorable action on April 4, 2023
 - Town Meeting voted to approve Article 28
 - Pending Attorney General approval

Section III-EE Center Gateway (CG) Zoning District

- Article 24 of the Spring Annual Town Meeting on May 2, 2023, the Planning Board sponsored an article to create a new zoning district (Center Gateway (CG) Zoning District)
 - Planning Board voted 5-0-0 to recommend favorable action on March 15, 2023
 - Finance Committee voted 12-0-0 to recommend favorable action on April 11, 2023
 - Town Meeting voted to approve Article 24
 - Pending Attorney General approval

Note Article 24 created and populated a new Zoning District column in the Use Regulation Schedule, therefore Article 16 of the 2023 Fall ATM only added two new Use Categories from the CG, which include Residential Mixed-use Development and Mixed-use Development.

The remainder of amendments to the Limited Commercial (LC) and Downtown Mixed Use (DM) Zoning Districts will be provided as an attachment prior to Thursday, September 28th - below are several amendments to the to the LC and DM District. Since 2003 there have been over 7 amendments to the DM Zoning District and since 1979 there have been over 8 amendments to the LC Zoning District.

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	<p>Section III-D Limited Commercial (LC) Zoning District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 30 of the Fall Annual Town Meeting on November 14, 2019, the Planning Board sponsored an article to add the use “Creative Production” to Section III-D (1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finance Committee voted 10-0-0 to recommend favorable action on September 19, 2019 ○ Town Meeting voted to approve Article 30 with a vote of 78-11-0 • Article 31 of the Fall Annual Town Meeting on November 14, 2019, the Planning Board sponsored an article to add the use “Specialty Craft Fabrication” to Section III-D(1) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finance Committee voted 10-0-0 to recommend favorable action on September 19, 2019 ○ Town Meeting voted to approve Article 31 with a vote of 83-4-1 <p>Section III-E Downtown Mixed-use (DM) Zoning District</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Article 30 of the Fall Annual Town Meeting on November 14, 2019, the Planning Board sponsored an article to add the use “Creative Production” to Section III-E(2a) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finance Committee voted 10-0-0 to recommend favorable action on September 19, 2019 ○ Town Meeting voted to approve Article 30 with a vote of 78-11-0 • Article 31 of the Fall Annual Town Meeting on November 14, 2019, the Planning Board sponsored an article to add the use “Specialty Craft Fabrication” to Section III-E(2b) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finance Committee voted 9-1-0 to recommend favorable action on September 19, 2019 ○ Town Meeting voted to approve Article 31 with a vote of 83-4-1
4	Why is it required for the Town of Natick and for the Town Agency sponsor(s)?
Response	<p>Article 16 is part of a strategy that spans warrant articles 15-17 to update the Use Regulation Schedule organizationally in preparation for future substantive amendments. Before making sustainable amendments to the Use Categories, is it essential that permitting requirements for these districts be added to the Use Regulation Schedule.</p> <p>Articles 15-17 are best practices to organize and establish a framework so that the Use Regulation Schedule can be user-friendly.</p>

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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 16. All work associated with this article was conducted by Town staff, members of the Planning Board, and members of the Natick community who volunteered their time. In terms of outcome, it may help improve staff efficiency in CED and the Building Department.
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	Article 16 builds upon the work set out in Article 15, setting the stage for future substantial amendments to the Use Regulation Schedule. The organization of the Use Regulation Schedule is an iterative process that began in earnest at the 2023 Spring Annual Town Meeting. We anticipate continuing to build upon on this framework incrementally at future Town Meetings.
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	The ability to utilize the Use Regulation Schedule is essential for the Town and stakeholders who want to live, work, and do business in Natick. Although not specifically identified in Natick 2030+ Master Plan, this effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the permitting process aligns with other efforts outlined in Natick 2030+ Master Plan. Natick 2030+ states that "Natick has clearly tried to stay current with new planning ideas and approaches to land use regulations." It is vital for Natick to continue to do so.
8	Who are the critical participants in executing the effort envisioned by the article motion?
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Natick Planning Board • Community and Economic Development staff • Stakeholders who use the Use Regulation Schedule •
9	What steps and communication has the sponsor attempted to assure that:

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	<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 opening public hearing, scheduled for September 27, 2023, was published in the Metro West Daily Newspaper on September 13, 2023 and September 20, 2023 ● Legal mailers were sent to the abutting communities and required parties of interest the week of September 18, 2023
10	Since submitting the article have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	No. The only item that needed to be addressed was how to present the information in Article 16 so that everyone can understand the nature and rationale of these organizational (and non-substantive) amendments.
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	Articles 15, 16, and 17 for the 2023 Fall Special Town Meeting, build upon each other. The amendments recommended in these articles are for organizational and clarification purposes. If Articles 15, 16, and 17 were not to be approved then the Use Regulation Schedule will continue to be sub-optimal and future amendments to improve the Use Regulation Schedule will be delayed.