



Town of Natick

Fall 2011 Newsletter

*Issued by Martha L. White,
Town Administrator*

Natick Board of Selectmen

Charlie Hughes, Chair
Carol Gloff, Vice Chair
Paul Joseph, Clerk
Joshua Ostroff
Nicholas Mabardy

Town of Natick, Massachusetts

13 East Central Street

Natick, Massachusetts 01760

www.natickma.gov

Hurricane Irene and “Reverse 911”

Natick and many other area communities were affected by this recent storm. I am very proud of Natick’s preparedness for and response to this event, in particular the Police, Fire and Public Works Departments. Members of these departments worked tirelessly to help keep roadways open and respond to emergencies throughout the community. As residents are undoubtedly aware, there was significant frustration with NSTAR’s response to the various power outages in Natick and throughout the region. In several instances, power lines embedded in downed trees remained “live” for several days, impeding the Town’s efforts to open obstructed roadways. Our discussions with NSTAR in this regard will continue over the coming weeks to help ensure a better response in future events.

This event provided the Town with an opportunity to utilize our new CodeRed “Reverse 911” emergency notification system. Based on feedback from residents, while this system was very well received and the notices were appreciated, there are some “bugs” to work out. Notably, at this time, we only have “land line” phone numbers entered into the system; we need to provide residents the opportunity to register cell phones or private lines. Residents can do so through the Town’s website www.natickma.gov or those without internet access can call Marylee Watkins, Executive Assistant to the Chief of Police at 508-647-9511. We will be issuing a test call on October 11. If you do not receive a call on this date, your phone number is not properly registered into the system and you should follow the instructions above.

Thank you very much for your cooperation in enabling us to contact you in an emergency.

Voting Precincts and Town Elections

Earlier this year, the Board of Selectmen approved new voting precincts to reflect the latest population figures from the U.S. Census, while taking into account recent and planned residential development. These precincts will take effect on January 1, 2012. Every voting precinct has changed, some more than others, requiring all 180 Town Meeting seats to be voted at the next Town Election.

Starting on November 29, nomination papers for Town Meeting seats will be available from the Town Clerk’s office. Town Meeting nomination forms must be returned to the Town Clerk’s office according to the following schedule:

- For incumbent Town Meeting members: Tuesday January 31, 2012 by 5:00 p.m. Note that, given the new precinct boundaries, “incumbent Town Meeting member” is limited to those who are presently elected and whose precinct number did not change. Incumbent Town Meeting members need only return a signed form to the Town Clerk’s Office.
- For new Town Meeting members: Tuesday February 7, 2012 by 5:00 p.m. Note that “new Town Meeting member” includes those not presently elected as well as those presently elected but whose precinct changed. Nomination papers must be picked up by the candidate and require signatures from 10 registered voters in their precinct.

Nomination papers for town-wide offices will also be available starting on November 29; these must be returned to the Town Clerk’s office by January 10.

Much more information regarding Town election and the new precinct boundaries will be forthcoming through the media as well as direct mailings to voters

and Town Meeting members. In addition, information can be found on the Town Clerk's website www.NatickMA.gov/clerk or through their office at 508 647-6430 ext. 4.

Fall Annual Town Meeting

The 2011 Fall Annual Town Meeting, which will convene on October 18 at the Wilson Middle School, has a number of interesting proposals for Town Meeting members to debate and decide, including capital budget requests; possible consolidation of general government and school building maintenance functions; possible consolidation of the departments that will be represented at the new Community/Senior Center Building (Human Services, Council on Aging, Veterans' Services and Recreation and Parks); several Home Rule Petitions; as well as proposed changes to the Charter and By-Law; and more. The complete Town Meeting warrant can be found at www.natickma.gov or from the Town Clerk's Office.

Solar Celebration

My Summer Newsletter detailed the Town Administrator's Energy Task Force's progress on solar installations at various locations; as of this writing we are in the process of planning a public event to showcase these projects. Please watch for further notices in local newspapers and on the town website. As a reminder, the following installations are in progress:

- Kennedy Middle School – 202 KW system that will offset approximately 50% of the electricity load for a first year savings of approximately \$20,000.
- Memorial Elementary School – 116 kW system that will offset 60% of the electricity load for an estimated first year savings of \$10,775
- Wilson Middle School – 302 kW system that will offset 45% of the electricity load for an estimated first year savings of \$28,900
- Bennett-Hemenway School – 103 KW system that will offset 20% of the electricity load for an estimated first year savings of \$9,800

Future phases involve the new High School and the Community/Senior Center, both of which have been determined to be feasible, and the Sassamon Trace Golf Course and the former gravel pit site on Oak Street, both of which are still being evaluated.

Guidance and cooperation from many individuals have helped make this effort a success, most notably Bob Bois, the Town's Environmental Compliance Officer.

Town Hall and DPW Office Hours

The Board of Selectmen recently voted to maintain through October the Town Hall office hours that were revised on a trial basis in July. These hours are as follows:

- Monday – 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Tuesday through Thursday – 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Friday – 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The Department of Public Works offers similar office hours, as follows:

- Monday – 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- Tuesday through Thursday – 7 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- Friday 7 a.m. to noon

During the month of October the Selectmen will consider this issue and determine whether to continue the current schedule, offer evening hours on a different day, or revert back to the former schedule.

Safe Steps

In the coming weeks, the Town will be conducting a survey of residents to learn more about your walking habits and routes, as part of the Safe Steps program, funded by the MetroWest Health Foundation. We appreciate your interest and cooperation as we seek to make Natick more walkable for everyone.

Transportation Projects

Oak Street is currently being reconstructed from Bacon Street to the Wayland Town Line, with the bulk of the work anticipated for 2012. The design for improvements to the intersection of Oak Street and Route 9 was recently approved by Massachusetts Department of Transportation; construction is scheduled for likely work in 2012. Reconstruction of Route 27 is on the list for future state funding and design work continues, while the Route 27 and Route 9 interchange has reached a 25% design stage and final design will be undertaken by the State before it is submitted for construction funding.

Website

The Town's website has been redesigned. We hope that residents will find the site a helpful tool to stay updated on Town activities and useful in conducting your business with the Town. Comments and suggestions are welcome.