

Warrant Article Questionnaire

Citizen Petitions Articles

Section I - Instructions for completing this questionnaire

1. **The completed Questionnaire is due to Finance Committee at least 5 business days in advance of your scheduled hearing date. Email to: lwollschlager.fincom@natickma.org**
2. Completing the questionnaire as requested is discretionary to the FinCom and is discretionary on the part of the petitioner. There is nothing to compel a petitioner under MGL, the Bylaws or Charter for anything that is requested
3. Finance Committee's request of the Article Sponsor to complete the questionnaire is supported by:
 - a. Section 2-11(e) of the Natick Home Rule Charter which "provide(s) for the establishment of standing committees (*Finance Committee*) to which shall be referred the subject matter of warrant articles for study, review and report in advance of town meeting action."
 - b. And by the Town of Natick By-Laws, Article 23, Section 4 Reports, Recommendations, "The Finance Committee shall consider all matters of business included within the articles of any warrant for a Town Meeting, and shall, after due consideration, report thereon, in print, its recommendation as to each article."
4. FinCom encourages article sponsors to provide complete and comprehensive answers to the questions. Your materials will be distributed to members well in advance of the Public Hearing date. The more specific and relevant information provided on the motion and the action you seek from Town Meeting the more prepared FinCom will be for the actual hearing with you.
 - a. Incomplete questionnaires, questionnaires not submitted on time or submitted in the absence of a prepared motion by the petitioner, WILL cause your hearing to be rescheduled to a later date.
 - b. This may mean that FinCom runs out of time to hear your article before the Finance Committee Recommendation Book closes for print and distribution and therefore there may not be a recommendation for Town Meeting to act on.
5. Whenever references are cited (relevant passages from the Natick Charter or By-laws, Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L.), Code of Municipal Regulations or other legislation, survey results, maps, news articles, etc.), or documentation about what other communities have done (known or projected), include them in their entirety with this questionnaire as follows:
 - a. For short citations you may include the content verbatim in the available response space. Please limit this to 500 words or less
 - b. For longer citations or source documents please include them as attachments to the submission. For additional files use a file naming includes your Article number, the sponsor last name and a short description name for the attachment/file (i.e. Article 27 _Doe_MGL Chapter 61A)
 - c. Whenever possible consider using URL links to the original source document in the response or as part of a list of attributions and sources that you provide. FinCom

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- members can link to your provided materials easily and we all save paper and minimize the possibility of misplaced file attachments, etc.
6. An article seeking a change to Zoning By-laws, Town Charter or By-Laws requires:
 - a. Zoning articles must identify the location in Town where the zoning change is to be applicable.
 - b. For FinCom and Town Meeting the Motion you submit for the hearing requires:
 - i. A complete copy of the current Zoning By-Law, Charter or Town By-Law language
 - ii. A complete copy of the proposed final language in the finished form
 - iii. A complete copy of a “red-lined” version of the language showing all changes, mark-ups, etc.
 - iv. All of the above must be provided electronically in advance of the hearing by the due date identified by the FinCom Chair.
 - c. A Public Hearing with the Planning Board.
 - i. It is expected that the Planning Board public hearing take place before the FinCom public hearing.
 - ii. Sponsors should contact the Director of Community & Economic Development or the Planning Board Chair to schedule the required hearing.
 7. The primary sponsor is expected to be the spokesperson/presenter at the FinCom hearings and at Town Meeting. If the sponsor is not prepared for that role, they should be ready to designate someone else and communicate that with the Finance Committee Chair in advance.
 8. Sponsors should review the questions and the prompts in Section II (the next section) in order to prepare their written responses and to understand the information FinCom seeks for the hearing
 9. The actual question response template is in Section III.
 - a. Be sure to complete the top section for article #, Title, Sponsor name and email contact information
 - b. Responses should be typed directly in the response field, below the question field.
 - c. The response field will expand as you type.
 - d. Please use 11- or 12-point type
 - e. Use bold, italics and underlines to help focus the reader’s attention to key content.
 - f. Avoid unnecessary formatting and font use
 10. Once the Questionnaire is complete the sponsor can:
 - a. Delete Sections I and II entirely and save on Section III. Or, save the entire file and return to Finance Committee Chair
 - b. **Save the file as a Microsoft Word document only without any passwords or restrictions.**
 11. When saving the final version use the following file naming convention: 202X {insert Town Meeting type: SATM, FATM or STM} Response Article {insert your article # without parentheses} {Sponsor Last Name} {Date Submitted using two-digit month, two-digit day and four-digit year with no spaces, or other punctuation marks}.
 - a. Example: 2022 FATM Response Article 28 Smith 09012022

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- b. This file naming convention makes it easier for the Finance Committee to manage the files from article sponsors and determine the most recent submission from each.
- c. If you send a revised version of the Questionnaire, please add the word "REVISED" and a version number (Version 1) to the file name. So it would look as follows: 2022 FATM Response Article 28 Smith 09012022_REVISSED_version 1

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Section II - Questions and Additional Prompts

Question	Question	Additional Prompts
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it is intended to be voted on by Town Meeting.	<i>If the motion is long (more than one page) or involves a Zoning By-Law, Natick Home Rule Charter or Natick By-Law change please use additional sheets for the motion and carefully follow the instruction on motions of these types.</i>
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is the proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the required Motion?	(Solving a problem through some action, providing new and currently unrealized benefits, extending some tangible existing value to a great level)
3	What does the sponsor gain from a positive action by Town Meeting on the motion?	Does the sponsor, have now or may have in the future, an equity interest; may realize a direct or indirect benefit now or in the future? What are those interests and/or benefits?
4	Describe with some specificity how the sponsor envisions how: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the benefits will be realized ● the problem will be solved ● the community at large will gain value in the outcome through the accompanied motion 	Why does the sponsor believe the proposed solution is workable and effective? What is your understanding of who benefits and who pays? What do you perceive to be the pros and cons of the proposed motion both long-term and short-term? Has the sponsor done any primary or secondary research on this topic that can be shared? Are there analogs or benchmarks that can be drawn from other communities or private sector to support the desired outcome?

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5	<p>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?</p>	<p>What is your understanding of the cost implications, both operating and capital, both immediate and long-term to the town?</p> <p>Would this benefit cover gaps or overlap in any way with other Town projects or services?</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.); 	<p>How does the proposed action fit into the framework of other local efforts currently underway (i.e. Natick Master Plan, Sustainability Initiatives, etc.)? Is state action pending?</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>	<p>Can a Town Committee or Town Official handle the matter more effectively?</p> <p>Is a vote of Town Meeting as effective as citizens' letters, telephone calls, or petitions in the case of addressing local issues?</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 ● Appropriate Town Boards & Committees were consulted ● Required public hearings were held 	<p>Have the Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, School Committee and Superintendent, Planning Board or other Town Agency had an opportunity to address the issue before bringing it to Town Meeting?</p> <p>Please provide the details as to which Boards, Committees or Commissions have held hearings, on what dates, how much time was spent by each in the</p>

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		hearing/meeting period, what was the outcome (vote, deferred, continued, etc.)
9	Why is it required for the Town of Natick AND for the sponsor(s)?	Why now versus at some later date? Has the problem been carefully defined and analyzed? Have alternative solutions been considered? Is more study required?
10	Since submitting the article petition have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?	What are those issues and how do they affect the efficacy of the proposed article
11	What are other towns and communities in the MetroWest area, or the Commonwealth of MA doing similar to what your motion seeks to accomplish?	
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?	

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

Article #	Date Form Completed:
Article Title:	
Sponsor Name:	Email:

Question	Question
1	Provide the article motion exactly as it is intended to be voted on by the Finance Committee.
Response	(Type response here)
2	At a summary level and very clearly, what is proposed purpose and objective of this Warrant Article and the required Motion?
Response	(Type response here)
3	What does the sponsor gain from a positive action by Town Meeting on the motion?
Response	(Type response here)
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	(Type response here)
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	(Type response here)

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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	(Type response here)
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>
Response	(Type response here)
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	(Type response here)
9	Why is it required for the Town of Natick AND for the sponsor(s)?
Response	(Type response here)

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10	Since submitting the article petition have you identified issues that weren't initially considered in the development of the proposal?
Response	(Type response here)
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	(Type response here)
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	(Type response here)