



# *Town of Natick* Winter 2016 Newsletter

*Issued by Martha L. White,  
Town Administrator*

## **Natick Board of Selectmen**

Charles Hughes, Chair  
Richard Jennett, Vice Chair  
Nicholas Mabardy, Clerk  
Joshua Ostroff  
John Connolly

*Town of Natick, Massachusetts*

*13 East Central Street Natick, Massachusetts 01760*

*[www.natickma.gov](http://www.natickma.gov)*

### **2016 Annual Town Election**

The 2016 Annual Town Election will be held on Tuesday, March 29. Nomination forms for town-wide offices are now available and must be completed and returned to the Town Clerk's office by 5:00 p.m. on January 12. Nomination papers for new Town Meeting members are due by February 9; incumbent Town Meeting members must give written notice to the Town Clerk of their intent to run for re-election by February 2. Please check the town website for further information or call the Town Clerk's office at 647-6430 if you have any questions.

Significant changes in the membership of the Board of Selectmen are inevitable. In October, Selectman Josh Ostroff announced that, due to increased work obligations, he would be resigning from the Board, effective March 29, 2016, one year into his current three-year term. Accordingly, the upcoming Town election ballot will include a two-year term for the Board of Selectmen.

Incumbents Richard Jennett and Charles Hughes are up for reelection this year. However, Mr. Hughes announced in November that he would not be seeking reelection. Of the current members of the Board of Selectmen, Mr. Hughes and Mr. Ostroff are the longest serving members, and both have served the Town in innumerable other capacities.

Mr. Hughes has served a total of 15 years on the Board of Selectmen as well as 12 on the Finance Committee. His service to the Town dates back to the 1980s and, accordingly, Mr. Hughes contributes substantial and valuable institutional knowledge, and a comprehensive understanding of the Town's financial and budgetary operations. Combined with his legal proficiency, Mr. Hughes brings expertise that will be greatly missed.

Mr. Ostroff has served on the Board for 10 years, and has been an effective advocate on a range of subjects, including pedestrian and other transportation issues, improved communications, programs to assist residents in need, and has led the effort for an updated Master Plan (more information below). He has also been a leader for communities across the state through his service with the Massachusetts Municipal Association, and his dedication will be missed.

### **Electricity Rates**

As you may know, the Town has an agreement with Consolidated Edison to provide electric utility rates at a fixed price that was bid in late 2014. Since then, electricity rates have decreased, and residents should explore their options - including opting out of the Town's program and choosing a different electricity supplier - to get the greatest savings. To learn more about your options, visit the Town web site at [natickma.gov](http://natickma.gov) or contact our Sustainability Coordinator, Jillian Wilson-Martin at [jwmartin@natickma.org](mailto:jwmartin@natickma.org) or 508 647-6555.

### **Town Meeting Actions**

2015 Fall Annual Town Meeting and Special Town Meeting acted on many issues, and used electronic voting machines for the first time. Proceedings and the record of votes are on the Town web site. Members debated at length on the fate of the Thomas Sawin House, the oldest structure and a historically significant landmark on South Street, and the Town will continue to explore options to preserve the house in cooperation with its owner, Mass Audubon, through a new Advisory Committee.

Acting on recommendations of a study committee, Town Meeting created a new fund to acquire open space, using \$5.5 million dedicated to this purpose and for eligible open space and park projects.

Town Meeting also voted to appropriate \$200,000 for the first phases of a updated Comprehensive Master Plan, under the direction of the Planning Board. This is an important milestone, as the last master plan dates to the early 1970s. Extensive public input will be solicited throughout this process, and we encourage residents to participate. The Planning Board will provide progress reports at all future Annual Town Meetings until the Master Plan is completed.

Town Meeting expanded the Property Tax Deferral Program, reducing the annual interest rate to 2% and increasing the allowable annual gross receipts from \$40,000 to \$56,000. Qualified residents should consider this and other programs available for taxes and other expenses; contact the Council on Aging and Human Services at 508 647-6540 to learn more.

Town Meeting approved legislation, identical to that approved by the Town of Framingham, requesting the state legislature to give the communities authority to fine utility companies who leave double poles and stray wires along our streets.

At the December 1 Special Town Meeting, the Town took action to preserve a signature 16-acre parcel atop Pegan Hill, which adjoins several other protected open space parcels in Natick and Dover that total over 54 acres. This area contains Natick's highest elevation, with unmatched views as far as Mount Monadnock and the Blue Hills. By acquiring a permanent conservation restriction, the Town will preserve this unique vista for future generations.

## **TED<sup>x</sup>Natick**

**x = independently organized TED event**

TEDxNatick will take place at Natick High School on Saturday, January 23, 2016. This live event will include local and regional speakers and performers sharing inspiring stories from medicine, technology, literature, history, martial arts, and everyday life. For a preview and tickets, please visit [www.tedxnatick.org](http://www.tedxnatick.org). This is an all-volunteer, community-driven event.

### **Personnel Updates**

After an extensive search, we are very pleased to welcome Geoffrey Lewis, Senior Planner in the Office of Community and Economic Development. Geoff, a Natick resident, brings extensive and varied experience that will well serve the Town. We also welcome

Patricia O'Neil, our new Executive Assistant in the Selectmen's Office. Trish's past work as a transcriptionist translates well for minute-taking at Selectmen meetings, and her computer skills and team approach makes her a great addition to our office.

### **Transportation News**

- Work on the Marion Street Bridge will soon begin. MassDOT plans to build a temporary pedestrian bridge construction.
- The Oak Street and Route 9 intersection has a new traffic pattern, and landscaping and related work will be completed by the Spring.
- For the Cochituate Rail Trail, a public hearing on design will be held in the coming months. Construction is planned to begin in 2018, and the Town is working to acquire the right-of-way from CSX using State and private funding.
- The Route 27 reconstruction project from Natick Center to Wayland is scheduled to begin in 2019, using federal and state funding.

### **Did You Know?**

- Parking in Natick Center is changing, with new kiosks, meters, locations and more to help balance the needs of all who use Natick Center. Parking is free through the holidays - please patronize local businesses!
- The Town is working with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council on a Natick Center Study to chart a course for future development. All are encouraged to participate. See [mapc.org/natickcenterplan](http://mapc.org/natickcenterplan)
- Prescription drugs can be dropped off at any time at the Police Station. Expired prescriptions or those no longer needed should be properly disposed to ensure they are not misused; medicines should not be flushed.
- Proper installation of child car seats is critical and can be tricky. Call the Police Department at 647-9518 to arrange an appointment for proper car seat installation and instruction to parents and caregivers.
- So-called "flushable wipes" wreak havoc on our sewer equipment! They become entangled and join together to form ropes that grind the pumps to a halt, requiring personnel to go into the pumping stations to remove these obstructions. Not only is this a particularly unpleasant job for our personnel, the strain on the pumps results in early and costly equipment replacement. Please do not use flushable wipes!