



Town of Natick

Summer 2010 Newsletter

*Issued by Martha L. White,
Town Administrator*

Natick Board of Selectmen

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Town of Natick, Massachusetts

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www.natickma.gov

Town Election & Reorganized Board of Selectmen

The March 30 Annual Town Election brought a change in the Board of Selectmen: Charlie Hughes, a long-time former member of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee; and Paul Joseph, who also serves as Chair of the Economic Development Committee, were elected to the Board. Previous members John Ciccariello and Kristine VanAmsterdam chose not to run for re-election. John and Kristine brought extensive expertise to the Board, due in no small part to their prior service on a variety of Town Boards and Committees over many years. Their long-standing contributions to the community are very valued and appreciated.

Many thanks to all who ran for elected office or volunteer for the Town in any capacity. The many programs and services we offer would certainly not be as effective – if even possible – without active public participation. Applications for the many boards and committees whose membership is appointed by the Board of Selectmen or Town Administrator are being accepted by those offices through early July.

Roadway Improvement Projects

Speen Street Culvert

Following the March rainstorms, representatives from the State Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) inspected the culvert on Speen Street, just south of West Central Street, and found significant deterioration, substantial enough to warrant closure of the southbound lane. The good news is that the state will be paying for repairs. The bad news is that this is an extraordinarily complex project involving the temporary relocation of major utilities and channeling of the flow of water between Fiske Pond and the so-called Settling Pond, as well as the installation of steel pilings to support the replacement culvert.

While the state will not be constructing a sidewalk in this location, it is anticipated that adequate width will be provided to allow the Town to install a sidewalk in the future.

The state plans to run double shifts to expedite the project; even so the work will necessitate full closure of Speen Street from West Central Street south beyond the first Roche Bros. driveway for about 4 months. Town representatives and state transportation engineers are working collaboratively to minimize disruptions during this critical project.

Route 9/Oak Street

We are on track to complete design of this intersection by the end of the year; all design funds have been derived through grants and developer mitigation funds. By the time this newsletter is received, the June 23 public meeting will have been held, giving residents an opportunity to learn more about the project design and schedule; this meeting will be rebroadcast on Pegasus and will be available as a webcast on the Town's website. Construction funds are also coming from non-local sources; thanks are due to all of Natick's state and federal legislative delegation, but in particular U.S. Congressman Edward Markey who has, to date, ensured the commitment of \$1.4 million; additional requests are pending. It is hoped that construction will begin in the spring of 2011.

North Main Street/Route 27

This reconstruction project extends from just north of Natick Center to the Wayland Town Line, but excluding the Route 9/Route 27 interchange. This also is a very complex project, and one in which we hope to incorporate underground utilities along at least a portion of the project while improving safety and mobility for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists.

Project costs based on the preliminary (25%) design are estimated at \$14.2 million; to date \$9.75 million has been preliminarily approved for project. Design work is being funded through previously dedicated developer mitigation funds. A hearing regarding this project design will be held later this summer.

Summary on Roadway Improvement Projects

As you can see, we are making progress on several major roadway improvement projects and facilitating significant private, grant, state, and federal funding – tens of millions of dollars – in support of these projects. We are very grateful for the support of our entire state and federal delegation, notably U.S. Congressman Markey, State Senator Spilka and State Representative Linsky.

We are working to provide improved information on these and other projects through the Town's Website – please check the site at www.natickma.gov for updates.

We are also, of course, completing springtime roadway repairs on roadways throughout the community. Roads throughout Metrowest took a beating this winter, and limited resources – staff and funds – have made it challenging to respond immediately to all notifications of roadway problems. Be assured that we are working as best as possible to complete these repairs.

Many thanks are due Patrick Reffett, Community Development Director whose coordination of the many funding sources, design engineers, state and federal funding entities, public input processes and more has brought about significant advancement of these and other projects. Also, Mark Coviello, Town Engineer has provided expert design advice and strong advocacy for Natick's interests to improve these projects. Many other employees, Board and Committee members and others have worked very hard to advance these projects.

Cochituate Rail Trail

The Town recently received a Conceptual Design Study Report for this proposed project that would link Natick Center, the Soldier Systems Center, the Natick Collection, the State Park and Framingham. For more information about the project and this milestone report, please visit www.natickma.gov/crt

Have a Safe and Happy Summer!

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Green Communities Designation

Natick was recently advised that it has been designated as a Green Community, a designation for which we have been working hard to attain. We were initially under the impression that few communities would qualify for this designation, ultimately 35 communities were approved. Although we were hopeful that more grant funds would be made available, Natick will qualify for up to \$175,000 which we intend to use for installation of a Solar PV array on the Kennedy Middle School, fund the difference between a traditional gasoline-fueled vehicle (SUV) and a hybrid version, and fund the CO2 sensors at Town Hall (for which funds previously approved by Town Meeting will now be available for another purpose).

In total, these projects are anticipated to reduce Natick's energy use by 300 MMBtu and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by about 32 tons of CO2 equivalent – an estimated savings of about \$10,000!

High School & Community/Senior Center Projects

Both of these projects are moving forward smoothly; both are scheduled to go out to bid later this summer with construction starting this fall. Visit the projects' websites at www.natickps.org (High School) and www.natickpsc.org (Community/Senior Center).

Update on Town's Finances

The 2010 Spring Annual Town Meeting approved the Town's FY 2011 budget in May. This austere budget funds a level of services that is supported – as they should be – from recurring sources of revenue. For the first time in many years, no funds from the Stabilization Fund or Overlay Surplus accounts were used in support of the Town's operating budget. In fact, this year we were able to put \$1.6 million *into* the Stabilization Fund. We are by no means, however, riding easy. Preliminary projected deficits for FY 2012 and FY 2013 are well into the millions. We must continue the fiscally prudent approach that has served us well, while recognizing those areas of government where budget and staffing reductions have noticeably affected our ability to offer the variety and quality of services that we take pride in delivering. The challenges brought about by the need to balance these objectives will continue to be met by exploring opportunities for consolidation and improved efficiencies while advocating, along with the Selectmen, for appropriate and predictable levels of state funding.