



TOWN OF NATICK
Summer 2007

Newsletter

Issued by the Town Administrator
Martha White, Acting Town Administrator

Natick Board of Selectmen:

Carol A. Gloff, Chair
Charles M. Hughes, Vice Chair
Joshua Ostroff, Clerk
John Ciccariello
Kristine VanAmsterdam

Town Administrator Status

Philip Lemnios resigned his position as Town Administrator effective March 30, 2007 and I was appointed by the Board of Selectmen to serve as Acting Town Administrator, having served as Deputy Town Administrator since September 2006. I know I join with many others in thanking Phil for his service to Natick and his dedication, integrity and good humor. He is missed.

In accordance with the provisions of Article 20 of the Town's By-Laws, the Selectmen appointed a screening committee to review applicants for the position of Town Administrator. The committee, working with a professional search consultant, has begun the search process and screening interviews are expected to commence in July.

The screening committee will identify the candidates it believes to be best suited to perform the duties of Town Administrator and submit not less than 2 and not more than 5 names to the Board of Selectmen, which shall appoint one nominee to the position of Town Administrator.

Town Election News

We had a very interesting town election in March, notably in the election of the Town Moderator and Town Meeting members.

The names of two candidates for Town Meeting member (one from Precinct 8 and one from Precinct 9) were inadvertently omitted from the ballot. A special election was held on May 22 exclusively for the election of Town Meeting members in Precincts 8 and 9 and the start of Town Meeting was delayed until May 29 to allow for the proper election of its membership.

In other town election news, long-time Town Moderator Paul Connolly was challenged for this position by Frank Foss. The machine count of ballots on election night indicated that Mr. Connolly had won the election by one vote. Mr. Foss requested a recount and a subsequent hand count of ballots revealed the race to be a tie, which by state and local law is characterized as a "failure to elect." In this event, it falls to the Board of Selectmen to appoint a person to fill the vacancy until the next town election. The Selectmen voted unanimously to appoint Frank Foss as Town Moderator until March 2008, and Mr. Foss presided over the spring Annual Town Meeting.

Annual Town Meeting

The spring Annual Town Meeting convened on May 29 with 33 articles on the warrant; the business of the meeting was concluded in four sessions. Town Meeting acted favorably on a number of issues, including authorization to file legislation to permit the town to lease a portion of the National Guard site on Speen Street for use as a park; creation of a fund from which the Commission on Disability may expend handicapped parking violation funds to address issues relating to handicapped accessibility and awareness; increasing the personal exemption for property tax payments for qualified elderly, disabled veteran or blind persons; funding for preliminary design of the proposed Cochituate Rail Trail; and much more.

Town Meeting also approved the town's operating budget for fiscal year 2008. In my presentation to Town Meeting regarding this budget, I expressed concern that substantial one-time funding sources and reserve funds were used to balance the budget, and that we

are likely facing significant financial challenges for fiscal 2009. A summary of my budget message to Town Meeting can be found on the town's website www.natickma.org under the Quick Link for Town Meeting and Budget Information.

Formation of Financial Planning Committee

In order to promote collaboration, development of short and long range recommendations regarding the town's financial condition and sharing of information, the Selectmen have formed a Financial Planning Committee that is made up of two members from each of the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee and School Committee, as well as the Town Administrator and Superintendent of Schools. The committee's overarching objective is to develop short and long range forecasts for revenues and expenditures and to develop strategies for meeting any projected shortfalls. It is hoped that, through a collaborative and cooperative process, members will achieve unanimous agreement on forecasts and strategies and will advocate for agreement with their respective board or committee.

Cochituate Rail Trail Project

The Cochituate Rail Trail Task Force continues its efforts to assess the opportunities and impacts of the proposed development of the rail trail, which would extend from Natick Center northerly to the Saxonville neighborhood in Framingham. Their efforts to identify and address abutter concerns, develop a preliminary design, identify potential funding sources for the land acquisition and trail development and other research will inform the decision-making process for this important project.

Recreation and Parks Department Events

A number of events are planned for the summer, including the Monday Concerts on the Common and Wednesday Family Entertainment series, both held at Natick Common. Dug Pond has also opened for the season. Visit the Recreation and Parks Department page on the town's website for further information.

Please visit our website often! We hope to use it to communicate better with you.

Road Projects

A number of road construction projects are planned this summer including Speen Street paving and sidewalk construction from Route 135 to Hartford Street, as well as from Hartford Street to Route 30 (this northerly section is being reconstructed by the Natick Mall). In addition, sewer re-lining projects are planned for North Main Street and Speen Street from Route 135 to Edwards Road and a water re-lining project is planned for Union Street. Several local roads will be repaved this summer using state so-called "Chapter 90" funds, including Pamela Road, Mulligan Street, Forest Street (Pond Street to Route 135), High Street (Curve Street to Route 135), Elmwood Ave (Route 27 to Cottage Street), Roxbury Ave, Forest Ave (Pond Street to Curve Street), Reynolds Ave, Western Ave, Waban Street, and Concord Street. The DPW Highway and Engineering Divisions are presently working to update the town's 3-year road paving plan.

Natick 360

During the weekend of June 8-10, residents met to prioritize Strategic Options – the programs, projects, and policies that will shape Natick's future. These Options were identified through an extensive series of workshops with boards and committees, the public and Natick's business community. Visit www.natick360.org to learn more about this critical community strategic planning process.

Other Important News

Residents are encouraged to contribute to the Elderly and Disabled Taxation Fund. These funds are used to assist elderly and disabled taxpayers who are having difficulty meeting their tax obligations. Donations may be made payable to the Town of Natick Elderly and Disabled Taxation Fund and sent to the attention of the Tax Collector (address below).

Interested residents are also encouraged to participate in local government. Committee vacancies are posted on the website, and the Committee Application Form can be found on the webpage of the Board of Selectmen.