

Nantucket Annual Town Meeting Highlights

Nantucket's form of government is an Open Town Meeting with an elected five-member Board of Selectmen and an appointed Town Manager. The 2010 census put the island population at 10,172. For the first time in many years, Nantucket's ATM was held on a Saturday, the last day of March, starting at 8:30 AM. The idea was to promote participation from those who found it difficult to attend at night. There were 727 voters in attendance, the meeting went all day and all but 8 of the Articles were decided. The meeting was continued to the following Monday. Following is a synopsis of some of the Articles that generated the most discussion in our community:

General Fund Operating Budget, Article 8: This article appropriates over \$61 Million to be raised from the Fiscal Year 2013 tax levy and other general revenues of the Town, of which \$22.5 million is the operating budget for the Nantucket School Department including the Community School. Article 8 was approved nearly unanimously.

The Windmill, Article 13: This was perhaps the most hotly debated article on the entire warrant. The Town's Energy Study Committee had put forth a proposal to build a single large wind turbine at the Nantucket Landfill. Although the majority of voters present seemed to favor the idea of alternative sources of energy, Article 13 failed to garner enough votes to pass (282 for - 463 against), due largely to concerns about the economic feasibility of the project. The Article had asked for \$3.9 million to fund the single turbine. Many people objected to the size of the proposed turbine - at 325 feet it would have been, by far, the largest structure on the island.

Sachem's Path, Article 31: An affordable housing project targeted towards mid-income islanders, Sachem's Path is located on ten acres of land on Surfside Road that the Town gave to the Housing Authority for this purpose decades ago. Sachem's Path will include forty 1,2 and 3 bedroom homes, each with its own yard and private driveway. The homes will be new construction and are designed to be energy efficient and therefore easy to live in and maintain. They will be priced to be affordable to individuals and families earning 65-150% of the area median income (between \$67,000 and \$157,000 annually). The home buyers must be able to qualify for a standard mortgage from a bank without special consideration. The non-profit developer, the Housing Assistance Corporation, is committed to using the local workforce to build these homes. The Community Preservation Committee had recommended funding from the CPC for \$990,000 towards Sachem's Path and the Finance Committee had made a recommendation to cut that funding. After a lengthy discussion on town meeting floor, the voters amended the article to put the funding back in and then passed it with a clear majority. It is obvious that people still feel the need for quality affordable housing on Nantucket. For more information on Sachem's Path: <http://www.haconcapecod.org/sachemspath/>

Coastal Properties Owned by Town (Sconset Bluff), Article 61: After a robust discussion about the merits of permitting private home owners on Baxter Road to privately fund erosion control measures on a pilot project of 400 linear feet at the base of the bluff, Article 61 passed. There are mitigation plans in place for cleaning it up in the event that the project is not successful. The property owners needed

permission from Town Meeting in order to use Town land which lies between their properties and the ocean.

Zoning Articles: There were many zoning articles approved that changed zoning in the Commercial Downtown District, streets off of upper Main Street, parts of Surfside, the Mid-Island area and Siasconset. If your property is in one of these area you should check with your broker to see how the changes many have impacted your zoning. For more detailed information please contact your Broker.

Parking Garage, Article 66: This article would have required a majority vote of Annual Town Meeting for any future multi-story parking structure within the Town of Nantucket. After spirited discussion the article failed to garner enough votes to pass. Those arguing against the article felt that the existing zoning and regulatory process gives the public ample opportunity for input.