

## **Nantucket: Annual Town Meeting Round Up 2022**

Annual Town Meeting (ATM) was held, as usual, inside the high school auditorium with the overflow accommodated in the gym. At one point early on the first night there were 920 people in attendance. The meeting lasted two long nights. Sarah Alger, Moderator, handled the meeting with grace and good humor. Below is a summary of articles of note:

Article 8 was the General Fund Operating Budget. The article sought \$104,523,366 to run the Town for FY 2023 and it passed overwhelmingly. Article 10, General Fund Capital Expenditures also passed, adding another \$36 million.

Harbor Master Building: ATM voted \$2,000,000 in supplemental funding to replace the Harbor Master Building on Washington Street. This still has to pass as an override at the ballot next week.

10-12 Washington Street: The meeting voted to appropriate the funds (\$4,750,000) to acquire by purchase, gift, or eminent domain, the transportation center, known as the Greenhound Building.

Affordable Housing Capital Expenditures: This article was sponsored by the Select Board in an effort to give them more flexibility when acquiring real estate for employee housing. Ten million dollars was approved, subject to an override at the ballot.

Short-Term Rental Regulations: There were 3 articles on the warrant – Articles 39 and 42 were sponsored by the Planning and Select Boards and Article 43 was sponsored by a representative of Ack-Now. Article 39, which put the framework in place to start identifying short-term rentals and putting in place regulations to deal with nuisance properties, passed by a large margin. The other two articles, which had been more controversial, were tabled and sent back to the Select Board, the Planning Board and the Finance Committee to form a committee with broad representation from the community to come up with suggestions for by-laws based upon factual information.

Zoning: The zoning article that required the most discussion was Article 55 which prohibits the use of any pools, water features and hot tubs in the Old Historic Districts of Town and Sconset. Zoning requires 2/3 positive votes to pass, and this article passed by 1 vote!

Plastic Nip Bottles: Nantucket's By-Law that deals with banning single-use plastics was amended to include nip bottles. The article must be approved by the state's Attorney General.

Gender Equality on Beaches: This article has attracted widespread attention nationally. After a lengthy, and lively, discussion, ATM voted to pass the article which now heads to the state for approval. If passed, it will permit women to choose to go topless on Nantucket's public beaches.

Housing Bank: For the 5<sup>th</sup> time ATM voted to endorse the Community Housing Bank Real Estate Transfer Fee. Legislation is currently pending at the state level. Should it pass, Nantucket will have a ½ percent transfer on sales over \$2,000,000, paid by the seller.

Fertilizer Ban: The meeting felt strongly that use of fertilizer is largely responsible for the degradation of the water quality in our harbors. ATM voted to ban fertilizer on Nantucket. This article is a Home Rule Petition, requiring state approval, prior to implementation.

Shooting Range: After a robust discussion, this article passed, and it authorized the Town to enter into a long-term lease of town land for a Shooting Range Facility located in the Madequecham area. This discussion started more than 15 years ago and there is clearly a lot of work yet to do before the range becomes a reality.