

Town of Acton

Annual Town Meeting Warrant



Monday, April 3, 2006

**The Annual Town Meeting will convene at 7:00 P.M. in the
Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Auditorium
36 Charter Road**

Notice of Election and Meeting

Annual Town Election Tuesday, March 28, 2006 7:00 A.M. – 8:00 P.M.

- Precinct 1** – Nagog Woods Club House – 100 Nonset Path
Precinct 2 – Conant School – 80 Taylor Road
Precinct 3 – Blanchard Auditorium, R. J. Grey Junior High School – 12 Charter Road
Precinct 4 – Blanchard Auditorium, R. J. Grey Junior High School – 12 Charter Road
Precinct 5 – Blanchard Auditorium, R. J. Grey Junior High School – 12 Charter Road
Precinct 6 – Conant School – 80 Taylor Road

For assistance in determining your election voting location, please use the State Elections Division web site www.WhereDoIVoteMA.com or contact the Town Clerk's office by e-mail at Clerk@acton-ma.gov or telephone at (978) 264-9615.

Annual Town Meeting Monday, April 3, 2006 7:00 P.M.

Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Auditorium

Note: Copies of the detailed Municipal Operating Budget are available at Town Hall, Public Safety Facility, Memorial Library and West Acton Citizens' Library. Copies will also be available at Town Meeting.

Table of Contents

Article Index	3
Board of Selectmen's Message	4
Town Manager's Message	8
Finance Committee's Message	12
Warrant.....	15
Consent Calendar	16
Articles	19
Glossary of Terms Commonly Used in Municipal Finance	67
Town Meeting Parliamentary Procedure	70
Internet References.....	73
Volunteer Application.....	75
Proposed Town Meeting Booklet	77

Article Index

<u>Article</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
1	Choose Town Officers	19
2	Hear and Accept Reports	19
3 *	Council on Aging Van Enterprise Budget	20
4 *	Nursing Enterprise Budget	21
5 *	Septage Disposal Enterprise Budget	21
6 *	Sewer Enterprise Budget	22
7 *	NESWC Enterprise Budget	23
8 *	Section 53E½ Self-Funding Programs	24
9 *	Chapter 90 Highway Reimbursement Program	26
10 *	Insurance Proceeds	26
11 *	Gifts or Grants	27
12 *	Federal and State Reimbursement Aid	27
13 *	Performance Bonds	28
14 *	Sale of Foreclosed Properties	28
15 *	Elderly Tax Relief – Reauthorize Chapter 73 of the Acts of 1986	29
16	Implement New Legislation Regarding Senior Tax Relief	29
17	Home Rule Petition – Senior Citizen Real Estate Tax Payments	30
18	Budget Transfer	31
19	Personnel	31
20	Capital Improvements – Equipment	33
21	Town Operating Budget	34
22	Community Preservation Program – Direct Appropriations from Fund Balance	35
23 *	Town Board Support – Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council	42
24	Acton Public Schools Budget	43
25	Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Assessment	43
26	Minuteman Regional School District Assessment	44
27	Acton Firefighters’ Relief Fund	44
28	Home Rule Petition – NESWC Enterprise Fund	46
29	Transfer Real Property- 28 Willow Street / 214 Central Street	47
30	Transfer Real Property- 74 River Street	48
31	Accept Comprehensive Water Resources Management Plan	49
32 *	Amend Town Bylaws – Housekeeping	50
33 *	Amend Town Bylaws – Rules and Regulations for ‘Carry-In’ Liquor	51
34 *	Amend Town Bylaws – Use and Sale of Tobacco and Smoking Products	52
35 *	Amend Town Bylaws – Non-Criminal Disposition for Zoning Bylaw	53
36 *	Amend Town Bylaws – Hazardous Materials Control	54
37 *	Amend Zoning Bylaw – Special Waste	56
38	Amend Zoning Bylaw – Rezone Land off Charter Road to General Industrial	57
39	Amend Zoning Bylaw – Parking Lots for Conservation and Municipal Recreation	58
40	Amend Zoning Bylaw – Productive Reuse of Underutilized Industrial Property	59
41 *	Amend Zoning Bylaw – Housekeeping	61
42 *	Accept Streets – Jackson Drive & Monroe Drive	63
43 *	Accept Sidewalk Easements – Martin and Maple Streets	64

* Article is on Consent Calendar

Article submitted by Citizen Petition

Board of Selectmen's Message

This Town Meeting Warrant is your invitation to participate in the legislative portion of Acton's town government. Acton citizens have a cherished tradition of governing themselves by means of an open Town Meeting. We encourage all Acton residents to attend. All registered voters are urged to participate in the debate and vote on the Articles presented. Other residents, even if they are not registered voters, are invited to attend and observe, or to view the proceedings on cable television Channel 8.

Town Meeting Dates, Times and Location

Annual Town Meeting will begin on Monday April 3, 2006 and is expected to continue on additional consecutive nights. All sessions will begin at 7:00 p.m. in the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Auditorium. Come early to get checked in by the Town Clerk's staff and to obtain additional information.

Regular attendees at Annual Town Meeting will note that many of the Articles in this Warrant relate to matters which are routinely addressed every year, such as the established Enterprise Budgets and the Schools' and Municipal Operating Budgets, while other Articles relate to issues and matters that are new or unique this year. Although some Articles, such as Zoning or Bylaw amendment proposals, do not involve appropriation of funds, much of the Annual Town Meeting's attention is focused on fiscal matters.

Town Meeting Warrant and Procedures

The Town Meeting Warrant is the agenda for the meeting. It is drawn up by the Selectmen from various proposals made by the Selectmen, the School Committees, other Boards, staff and citizens. The Selectmen determine the order that the Articles are printed to appear in the Warrant. The Articles will be considered in the order in which they appear, unless the Moderator, or the meeting itself, changes that order. Each Article is intended to give fair notice of the topic to be discussed and voted upon, thus any motion made at Town Meeting under one of these Articles must be found by the Moderator to be within the scope of the printed Article. At the Town Meeting, the **motion** made under each Article will describe the specific action that is proposed to be taken. The wording of the motion, and any amendments that might be offered to the main motion, may differ from the exact wording of the Article, but as indicated above must be within the scope of the Article. Accordingly, it is suggested that each attendee listen closely to the reading of the **motion**, and any amendments made before voting.

Your attention is invited to the Warrant section on Parliamentary Procedure and a Basic Guide to Town Meeting Process written by the Town Moderator. The best debate is conducted by those who have informed themselves concerning the issues. Informed debate is delayed when speakers rise only to ask basic questions that could be individually addressed. To assist speakers to inform themselves in advance, and to avoid delays during the meeting engendered by persons seeking basic information, the Board of Selectmen strongly encourages and solicits questions in advance concerning any of the proposed Articles. Information in regard to the Articles is available from any of the people listed after each Article summary, or a general inquiry may be made to the Town Manager's office (978-264-9612) for an appropriate referral. Copies of the Municipal Operating Budget will be made available in advance of the meeting at the Memorial Library, West Acton Citizens' Library, Public Safety Facility, and Town Hall. Copies will also be available at Town Meeting. Furthermore, personnel designated by staff or the Moderator will be available in the auditorium during the Meeting to answer informational questions which may not be of interest to the entire assemblage on a one on one basis.

New Articles This Year

This year Town Meeting will consider several new initiatives on the Warrant. Two items dealing with tax relief for seniors are included that would provide additional relief to seniors who have difficulty paying their property taxes. The initial step toward the expansion of the sewer district will be taken through one article related to the comprehensive water resource study on how the town can best manage its water resources over the next twenty years. This includes recommendations on the areas of greatest need and exploration of various solutions. Also a home rule petition is being put forward that would allow the town to transfer funds from the NESWC enterprise fund to the general fund for possible future municipal use. Two articles are on the Warrant that would provide the opportunity to develop additional affordable housing, one through the Acton Community Housing Corporation and the other through Habitat for Humanity. In addition, a proposal to make slight modifications to the Hazardous Materials Bylaw is also included on the Warrant.

Budgets

Again this year members of the Board of Selectmen, the School Committees and the Finance Committee met on a regular basis through the Acton Leadership Group (ALG) to coordinate the annual budgets and to develop both expenditure and revenue projections for the coming years. The ALG process has worked successfully for several years to bring a coordinated set of budget proposals to Town Meeting. The ALG is composed of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Board of Selectmen and Finance Committee, the Chairs of the Local and Regional School Committees and staff from both town government and the schools.

This has been a difficult year to develop reliable projections of revenues because local aid from the state has been in a great state of flux. A number of different proposals to change the Chapter 70 education aid formula have been proposed including an innovative proposal from Acton's local leadership. We have worked closely with our legislators in an attempt to increase the amount of local aid and the initial budget from the Governor would appear to indicate that such lobbying has paid off. The Governor's budget includes an increase of 27 percent in state aid, including a 48 percent increase in Chapter 70 (education) aid to the Regional School District. If the projections contained in the Governor's budget do become reality, it would restore the cuts we experienced over the last four years, and would mean that we could meet all of our budgetary expenses without the use of any reserves.

As the Warrant goes to press, however, there is considerable uncertainty about whether Acton will realize these significant increases. The Governor's budget only increases Chapter 70 aid by 5 percent in total across the state, and there is concern among members of the ALG that local aid, particularly Chapter 70 aid, may not ultimately increase at the rate currently contained in the Governor's proposed budget. The latest version of the ALG three-year plan is attached, and the plan takes a "middle of the road" approach with regard to expected Chapter 70 revenues for FY07 using a 15 percent increase. This represents about the mid-point between the possible high increase of 27 percent and the low forecast of 5 percent. If this plan holds true, we will balance our budget with a very limited amount of cash reserves.

In addition, the outlook for FY08 looks considerably more promising than last year when we were forecasting the need for a \$2 million operating override in FY08. At present, it appears that we will have sufficient cash reserves to meet the current projected deficit in FY08 and thus not require an operating override. As the plan states, these numbers are "highly volatile and subject to change," but at the moment the budgetary picture does appear better than it did just a year ago.

Thank You to Our Volunteers

In addition to trying to balance our budgetary needs against limited resources, another necessity for the healthy function of our local government and community is the flow of active, interested citizens willing to volunteer their time, talents, and energy to participate as members of the Town's many volunteer regulatory and advisory Boards, Commissions and Committees. Volunteers are the very foundation of our government, and as the needs of the Town expand, so does the need for volunteers. No special knowledge is necessary to volunteer, only an interest to serve the community and advance the public good, combined with a willingness to learn. The rewards may be intangible, but are very real. We encourage you to volunteer by filling out the Citizen Resource Sheet which is included in this Warrant, tearing it out and mailing it to Town Hall, depositing it in the marked box in the lobby outside the auditorium at Town Meeting, or handing it to any Selectman at this meeting. Please consider helping your Town by volunteering some time – we believe you will find it very rewarding.

Peter K. Ashton, Chair
Walter M. Foster, Vice Chair
F. Dore' Hunter, Clerk
Lauren S. Rosenzweig
Andrew D. Magee

ALG 3-Year Budget and Revenue Forecast

FY08/FY09 budget increases assumed at 5.5% per year.

	FY	2006 (Recap)	2007 Plan	2008 Forecast	2009 Forecast
Revenues:					
Tax Levy:					
Base	\$	46,480	\$ 52,256	\$ 54,112	\$ 56,015
2 ½%	\$	1,162	\$ 1,306	\$ 1,353	\$ 1,400
New Growth	\$	814	\$ 550	\$ 550	\$ 550
Debt Excl.	\$	2,817	\$ 3,369	\$ 3,172	\$ 3,101
Overlay	\$	(500)	\$ (500)	\$ (500)	\$ (500)
Total Tax Levy (excl. current yr. override)	\$	50,773	\$ 56,981	\$ 58,687	\$ 60,566
Cherry Sheet	\$	4,186	\$ 4,876	\$ 5,120	\$ 5,376
SBAB - Twin School	\$	1,086	\$ 1,086	\$ 1,086	\$ 1,086
Excise Taxes	\$	2,835	\$ 3,300	\$ 3,465	\$ 3,638
Fees	\$	705	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,400	\$ 1,600
Int. Income	\$	190	\$ 250	\$ 250	\$ 250
Pension/Pothole/Other	\$	82	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Regional Revenue	\$	2,532	\$ 2,903	\$ 3,048	\$ 3,201
Regional E&D Acton's share	\$	314	\$ 337	\$ 200	\$ 200
HS Interest/Bond Prem.	\$	-	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Free Cash /Overlay surplus	\$	-	\$ 137		
Operating Override	\$	3,800	\$ -		
Capital Override					
Revenues before Overrides	\$	62,703	\$ 71,070	\$ 73,256	\$ 75,917
Revenues including Overrides	\$	66,503	\$ 71,070	\$ 73,256	\$ 75,917
Revenue incl override excluding debt/SBAB	\$	62,600	\$ 66,615	\$ 68,998	\$ 71,730
 Debt Exclusion:					
Debt on APS	\$	489	\$ 505	\$ 517	\$ 526
Debt on JHS/SHS	\$	1,213	\$ 1,798	\$ 1,618	\$ 1,612
Municipal Debt Incurred	\$	570	\$ 537	\$ 520	\$ 454
Debt on Police station	\$	545	\$ 529	\$ 517	\$ 509
Total Debt Exclusions	\$	2,817	\$ 3,369	\$ 3,172	\$ 3,101
 DRAFT Budgets Excluding Debt:					
Municipal Budget	\$	18,971	\$ 20,417	\$ 21,540	\$ 22,725
APS Budget	\$	20,479	\$ 22,047	\$ 23,260	\$ 24,539
ABRSD Budget - Acton Share	\$	22,356	\$ 23,401	\$ 24,688	\$ 26,046
MM Assumption	\$	780	\$ 750	\$ 773	\$ 796
Subtotal schools	\$	43,615	\$ 46,198	\$ 48,720	\$ 51,380
TOTAL	\$	62,586	\$ 66,615	\$ 70,260	\$ 74,105
 NET POSITION	 \$	 14	 \$ 0	 \$ (1,262)	 \$ (2,375)

NOTE: FY08 deficit may be resolved via combination of budget cuts, use of available reserves or operating override.

Town Manager's Message

Each year we spend a great deal of time and effort debating the dollar costs of municipal services. Much of this Town Meeting Warrant and the work of Town Meeting will be dedicated to that discussion. There are, however, other “costs” of municipal services that are often lost in the financial debate ... the costs in lives, property and quality of life if municipal services fail.

Hurricane Katrina, the worst natural disaster in our country’s history, did more than destroy New Orleans. It brought home, in graphic detail, the vital role that municipal services play in the health, safety and wellbeing of a community’s citizens.

In emergency or storm situations, when others rush home to be with and protect their families, municipal employees are called upon to leave their own families and protect the health and safety of others. We can not shut the door and walk away – no matter what the circumstance. We are the front line. We must have the personnel and resources necessary to meet the challenge, whatever it may be. With few exceptions, this involves almost every municipal department, large or small, especially in a community like Acton. Hurricane Katrina underscored this essential truism in New Orleans, on an epic scale.

Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services and local Emergency Management Agencies are the first line of defense in any emergency; keeping the peace, protecting property and lives and providing shelter services. Depending on the event, after the initial incident, Municipal Engineers and Public Works Departments may be called in to identify, evaluate and monitor critical infrastructure that has been damaged and/or is in danger of collapse or failure, and to provide manpower and heavy equipment to clear roads and debris. Public Health officials are essential in identifying and monitoring water and pollution problems and issuing appropriate orders or guidelines. Building officials are called upon to inspect buildings and structures that may have been damaged and are in danger of collapse. Social Service agencies become the critical support structure for those who are displaced or otherwise unable to fend for themselves. All of these services require Administrative support in order to function.

The tragedy in New Orleans evidences elements of failure on the part of every one of these vital municipal services to one degree or another. Police were unable to “protect and serve”. Rescue and Emergency Medical Services were totally overwhelmed. Engineering and Public Works functions failed – either before or during the storm - to anticipate the integrity or adequacy of the levy system and take appropriate action. Working with no electrical power, contaminated water supplies and failed sanitary facilities, Public Health officials and Building Inspectors could do little but wait for the worst of conditions to subside and then try to pick up the pieces. Social Services never stood a chance and one might speculate that Administrative support was more interested in bolstering the tourist economy than in properly planning for and supporting the services that would save lives and property. In this tragic instance, it appears that municipal services failed or were inadequate. When they failed, thousands of people who relied on these services to perform their functions timely and properly were not capable of defending themselves or escaping the ensuing flood. Lives were lost. Property was lost. The city was doomed.

To be sure, some of the risks in New Orleans are not shared by Acton. Most notably, we do not rely on a system of levies to hold back the storm. We are, however, vulnerable to any number of potential sources of risk due to our proximity to factors such as the Atlantic Ocean, the city of Boston, Logan and Hanscom Airports, Routes 2 and 495, the Correctional Facility in Concord, the MBTA and freight rail lines, local dams, contaminated industrial sites such as WR Grace and Nuclear Metals, Fort Devens, the high pressure Tennessee Gas Line and any number of other potential sources of trouble that our citizens may never imagine exist as local dangers. For anyone who may doubt (or may have forgotten) the implied risk of these factors, Acton has already experienced accidents and incidents of significance in nearly all of these areas:

- The Blizzard of '78 (and many smaller hurricanes and storms) impacted us as a direct result of our proximity to the Atlantic Ocean.
- The city of Boston poses a regular and continuing threat. A major incident in Boston (terrorism or otherwise) could have significant repercussions on communities as close to the core city as Acton.
- We are under many of the flight paths to and from both Logan and Hanscom Airports, subjecting us to the potential that a commercial or military aviation disaster could occur here. Within recent memory, a military cargo aircraft of substantial size crashed in Lincoln, on approach to Hanscom Airfield.
- Trucks carrying hazardous materials regularly travel Routes 2 and 495, not to mention the fact that Route 2 is one of the major east-west arterials that would serve greater Boston in the event of a massive evacuation away from the coast.
- The Correctional facilities at Concord pose a present and real threat to Acton. Anytime there is an escape or disturbance, Acton residents are in close proximity to the risk.
- MBTA and freight rail lines run through Acton and represent a real and present danger to the tens of thousands of vehicles that negotiate the five grade crossings in Acton daily. Moreover, freight trains using these lines, transport hazardous materials and are susceptible to accidents. A significant train wreck in South Acton during the 1970's scattered freight and tanker cars over much of the rail bed and embankments between Main Street and the Parker Street crossing.
- There have been two storm events within the last twenty years when a catastrophic failure of the private dam on Powder Mill Road appeared imminent, placing downstream businesses and homes in significant peril. In both instances, Municipal engineers, personnel and resources had to be rushed to the scene to stabilize and secure the structure until the crisis subsided.
- After nearly three decades of battling the contamination at the WR Grace Superfund Site in South Acton, many of our residents have forgotten (or never knew) that Acton is "home" to one of only two contaminated sites in the entire nation that was specifically named when Congress wrote its Federal Superfund Legislation more than 20 years ago.
- Fort Devens is no longer an active military base but its legacy lives on. Last October a load of what was thought to be clean fill was transported from a Fort Devens construction site to a residential development site in Acton. The fill turned out to be not as clean as initially thought. A World War II vintage, live mortar shell was discovered by an alert worker as he spread this material. Local and State emergency personnel were called to the site, isolated the ordinance and then exploded it before any unsuspecting workers, homeowners or children came in contact with it.
- Although we have never encountered a problem with the large, high pressure Tennessee Gas Line that transports bulk natural gas through portions of Acton, its mere presence constitutes a potential hazard of substantial proportion.

This long list is not intended to unduly alarm anyone. Rather, it is offered to point out that, in addition to the normal risks, there are extraordinary perils that are present on a daily basis in our quiet community and to underscore the vital importance of having competent, capable local services to protect the health and safety of our residents in the event of potentially catastrophic events. While we hope and anticipate that Acton will never experience a tragedy of the proportions experienced in New Orleans, we do run the real risk that overtaxed, under-funded municipal services will not be able to perform adequately under normal or extraordinary circumstances.

For years I have expressed my deep concern that our municipal services have not been sufficiently funded to provide the necessary resources (both personnel and equipment) to properly carry out our daily responsibilities. Today, more than ever, I fear that one or more of our systems will fail, with catastrophic consequences. Since 1993, Municipal Staff has grown at the rate of less than 1 ½% per year while we have experienced huge increases in workloads at all levels:

- Our professional staff regularly puts in 50-60 hour work weeks just to keep their heads above water.
- There is no time for orderly, proactive activities – only reactive.
- Significant matters are falling through the cracks in all departments and important opportunities are slipping away.
- In a technically oriented, sophisticated community like Acton, our citizens and Board of Selectmen expect a modern, up to date website, yet we barely have enough Information Technology support to keep our basic, essential systems operational and manage the 25,000 e-mail messages that now inundate our system monthly.
- Our Finance staff has out-performed all reasonable expectations in implementing a new financial system while:
 - creatively financing a significant sewer project that was undercapitalized from the start
 - implementing a sewer betterment and O&M billing system
 - implementing the financial billing and accounting requirements of the Community Preservation Act

but these efforts have taken critical resources away from important daily functions (assessing, tax billing, tax collections, accounting and treasury) that were already over-stressed, leaving us vulnerable to disastrous failure.

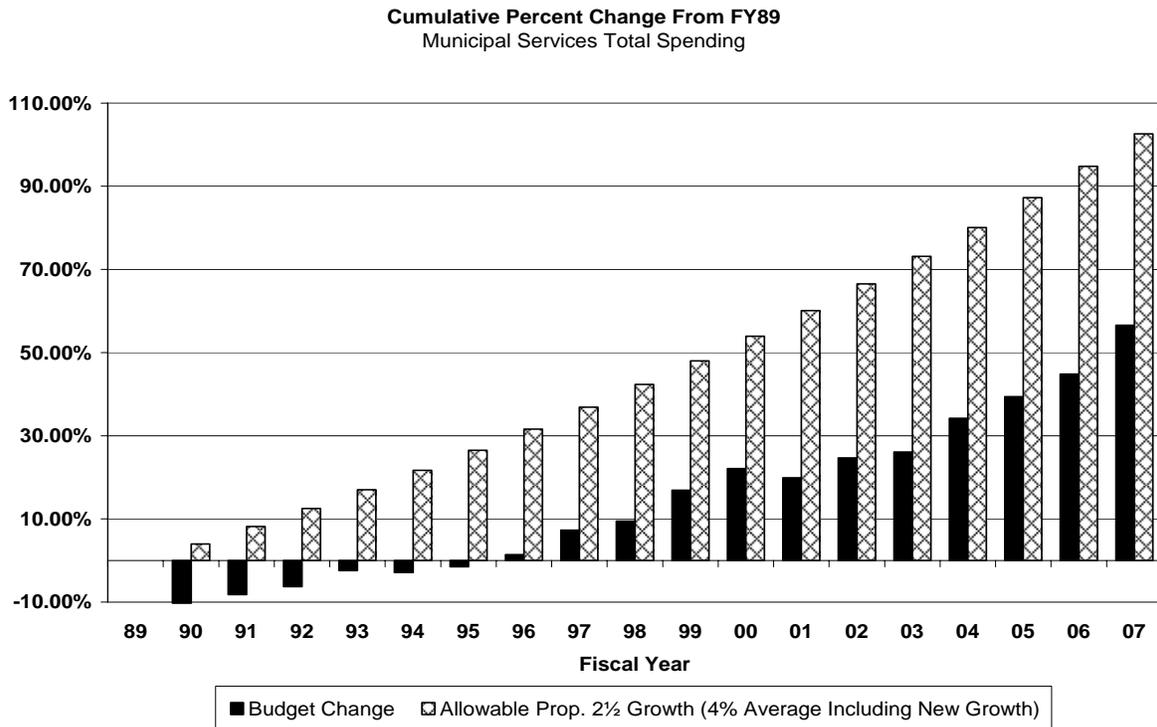
- Our land use departments are coping with numerous controversial development projects (Chapter 40B Affordable Housing Comprehensive Permits) that take vast amounts of staff time away from departments that have already experienced reductions in force to accommodate public safety needs and other municipal budget shortfalls in previous years.
- We have added thousands of square feet of municipal facilities that require maintenance and utilities, with virtually no increase in staff or resources to handle them.
- We are adding acres of play and sport fields with no additional staffing to mow and maintain them.
- We are adding miles of sidewalks with no additional staffing to plow and maintain them.
- We are adding numerous committees and sub-committees, requiring staff support and coverage of evening meetings, with no increase in staff.

All of this requires man-hours that must either be taken from, or added to, existing workloads. Consequently, we are seeing professional and hourly staff regularly investing the 50-60 hour work weeks noted above. The sensitivity of much of this work is such that we need staff fresh and alert to avoid serious mistakes and oversights. We are not getting that. Our staff is tired and overworked.

By any measure, we do not fund any of Acton’s municipal services at a level that is comparable to like services in like communities. In fact, we do not even allocate resources at a level that is comparable to the average Massachusetts community. The Department of Revenue (DOR) compiles statistics that allow comparison of all communities in the Commonwealth. From those statistics one can quickly see that Acton taxpayers invest far less, per capita, in municipal services than the average taxpayer across the state. Acton invests \$714 per capita in all of its municipal services. That is \$226 (or 24%) below the state-wide average and places us in the bottom 50%, behind 216 of the other 350 communities in the state. Of that investment, \$110 goes to Police services (ranking us in the bottom 35%, behind 233 other communities), \$127 goes to Fire and Emergency Medical Services (ranking us in the bottom 36% of full-time “career” departments and 8% below the average of those departments¹), \$80 goes to Public Works (ranking us in the bottom 12%, behind 312 other communities).

¹ Statistics for Fire Services, on a state-wide basis, do not distinguish between full time “career” and volunteer departments. As a consequence, Acton’s ranking appears disproportionately high using that measure. There are 87 full-time departments in the Commonwealth. These statistics are based on comparisons with those departments.

We simply do not allocate sufficient resources to any of our municipal services to reasonably insure against failure, let alone provide for additional services that our citizens expect and deserve. From the following chart one can see that the cumulative rate of growth of the municipal budget has been substantially below the cumulative rate of growth in available revenues for almost 20 years!



We are proud of what we achieve within these austere limits but we know we are on the verge of significant failure. Our circumstances are such that we are not likely to experience the type or magnitude of failure that we saw in New Orleans (although we must be mindful that officials and residents of New Orleans never expected or planned for the particular set of circumstances that doomed their city). Our failure, when it comes, will more than likely be a failure to have enough Police or Fire coverage to adequately protect people and property when an accident or significant storm occurs. It could come in the form of a significant breakdown in our financial systems due to our lack of sufficient staff to adequately monitor and analyze our more than \$150,000,000 worth of annual transactions. It could come from another major hazardous materials incident or from an infectious disease outbreak resulting from our lack of resources to monitor and control these potential liabilities. Failure may be lurking in local infrastructure such as dams, bridges and culverts - many of which are privately owned - for which we lack the staff to monitor and maintain their integrity. It could come in the simple failure to maintain our citizens' confidence in our ability to provide ordinary day-to-day services that compare in any way with like communities. The citizens of Acton have been extraordinarily supportive over the years, repeatedly expressing your confidence in the form of favorable votes on critical issues. In the end, this could be the most devastating failure of all.

The immeasurable talent, experience and dedication of our remarkable staff have given us the resilience to succeed in the face of these daunting obstacles. We have delayed the inevitable failure but we are reaching the point of desperation. We must fix this situation or be warned of the seriousness of the consequences. We are clearly gambling the health, safety and wellbeing of every Acton resident and anyone who works or visits here. We must move to correct this disparity before the law of averages catches up with us in some tragic, preventable way.

Respectfully Submitted,
Don P. Johnson,
Town Manager

Finance Committee's Message

Acton's Bylaws require that the Finance Committee "consider any and all municipal questions for the purpose of making reports and recommendations." Thus, despite the word "Finance" in our name, our purview is not limited to financial matters. We are appointed by the Moderator, but our primary role is to provide you, the voter, with an independent source of information and analysis regarding matters that come before Town Meeting. As you read through the warrant, you will see that many of our recommendations are "deferred". This is because we continue to work right up to the night of Town Meeting in order to base our advice on the latest information.

The FY07 Budgets Remain Uncertain

As noted in the Selectmen's message, the FY07 budget outlook remains uncertain. If the levels of state aid proposed in the Governor's budget are maintained by the legislature, Acton will receive about \$1.8M more aid than last year, an increase about \$1.5M higher than we had initially expected. In this scenario, we will be able to fund the currently proposed 6-8% increases in the municipal and school budgets without an operating override or the use of reserve funds. This will allow additions to personnel for both the town and schools and the purchase of a number of capital items. If the legislature elects to cut aid to Acton, an outcome that won't be known until after Town Meeting, we will need to close the resulting gap by budget cuts, the use of reserves, or a combination. As a hedge against this uncertainty, the municipal and school departments will defer new hiring and capital purchases until the state aid numbers are finalized.

The New ALG Formula and Increased Fees

Until this year, revenue from most fees charged by municipal departments was included in the ALG (Acton Leadership Group) budget, and any increase was split approximately 30%/70% between the town and schools. Most school fees and some municipal fees, such as those charged by the ambulance service, go into revolving accounts and are excluded from the ALG budget. This year, the ALG formula was changed to split only property and excise taxes, while allocating all other revenue sources to either the municipal or school budgets. In response to this new approach, the town has projected that it can collect \$1.2M in fees in FY07, a \$0.5M increase or 70% over FY06. This increased fee revenue equates to a 2.6% increase in the municipal budget, with an additional roughly 5% increase expected to be supported by higher state aid and local taxes. Town staff feels confident that the projected fee increases are achievable, and within the limits set by state law, which prohibits charging more than the actual cost for a particular service.

Living With Proposition 2 ½

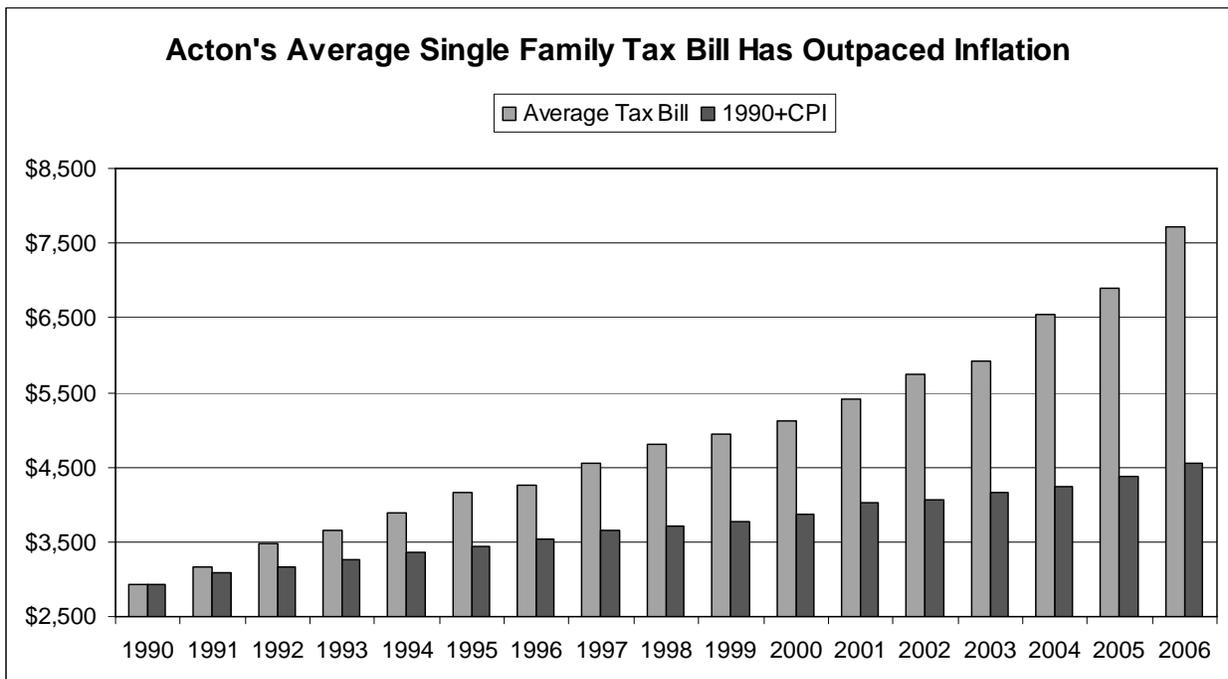
As most everyone knows, the state law known as Proposition 2 ½ limits the annual increase in Acton's tax levy to 2.5%, plus new growth, which in recent years has added another 1-2% depending on the rate of new construction. Thus, the roughly 80% of our local budgets that is supported by property taxes can't sustain annual growth of more than about 3.5% to 4.5% without overrides. This year, we hope to benefit from a big increase in state aid, which supports about 13% of our budgets, but we can't expect this to continue. The remainder of our revenues comprises excise taxes (5%) and fees and interest (2%). We can reduce pressure on residential taxes by increasing commercial development, but this isn't easily done and involves other trade-offs. So the challenge facing the Selectmen and School Committees nearly every year is finding the right balance between raising taxes and controlling costs.

Thinking about Costs

Personnel costs account for roughly 70% of our budgets and most of our employees are covered by collective bargaining agreements. When a contract calls for a 2% or 3% annual wage adjustment, this refers to the increase in the base wage at each level. The actual increase in wage costs is a mixture of several factors. Recently hired employees are moving up the “steps” of the wage structure, and may see 5-10% increases. Longer-term employees, who’ve reached the maximum level, may receive only the contract increase. And turnover can result in replacing senior level employees with more junior new hires. In recent years the overall result has been about a 4-5% annual increase in salary costs, roughly in line with what local tax revenues can support. Unfortunately, health insurance and retirement benefit costs have been growing much faster, on the order of 15% or more per year. And benefits account for about one third of total employment costs. Thus, the only really effective way to control personnel costs is by managing headcount, which in most years means finding ways to do more with less.

A Longer Term Perspective

With the wind at our backs from the expected increases in state aid, the FY07 budgets are likely to pass at Town Meeting without much controversy. However, it’s worth keeping an eye on the long-term trend. The cost of government at all levels has been growing faster than inflation, wages, or economic output, and Acton is no exception. The light bars on the graph below show Acton’s average single family tax bill, as reported by the state’s Division of Local Services. From 1990 to 2006, the average tax bill has grown from \$2,922 to \$7,724, an average increase of 6.26% per year. This is more than double the 2.8% rate of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index. If Acton’s average single family tax bill had grown only as fast as inflation, as shown by the dark bars, it would be only \$4,548 in 2006 or more than 40% less.



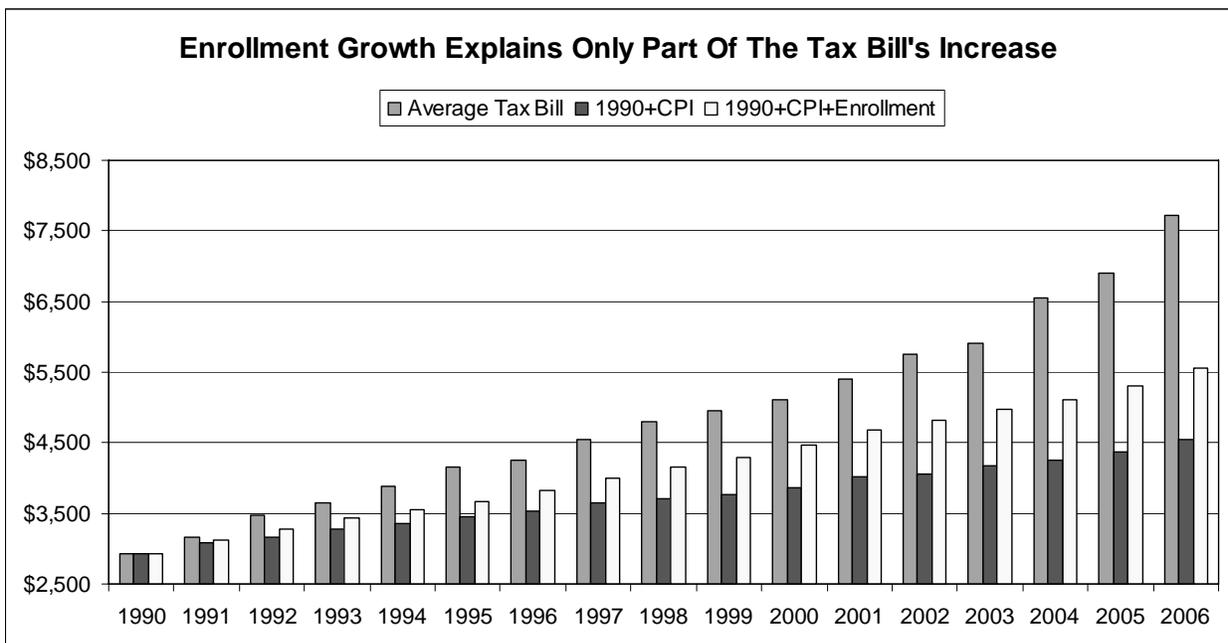
The light bars show Acton’s average single family tax bill (see <http://www.dls.state.ma.us/mdmstuf/proptax.htm>). The dark bars show the value of the 1990 tax bill adjusted for inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (see <http://www.bls.gov/cpi/>).

The Role of New Growth

The 6.26% growth rate shown on the graph above does not mean that everyone's tax bill has grown that fast. New houses tend to be more expensive than the average house in Acton, and the value of this new growth increases both the available tax levy and the average tax bill. However, it does follow that we have been spending the taxes paid by these new households, so the average cost of government per household is still growing more than twice as fast as inflation.

The Effect of School Enrollment

To some extent, we are victims of our own success. With the top-ranked school system in the state, Acton attracts families with children whom they intend to send to the public schools. And as elsewhere Acton has experienced a mini-baby-boom that also boosts enrollment. As a result, our K-12 enrollment has grown 55% since 1990, while the number of residential parcels has only grown by 15%. Factoring in this 35% increase in the number of school children per residential parcel, plus inflation, explains about one-third of the difference between the \$7,724 actual tax bill and the \$4,458 value of the 1990 tax bill adjusted for inflation (see chart below).



The left-hand bar in each year shows Acton's average single-family tax bill. The middle bar shows the value of the 1990 tax bill adjusted for inflation as measured by the CPI. The right-hand bar shows the 1990 tax bill adjusted year by year for the growth in school enrollment and inflation.

The Future

If we want to keep Acton affordable for all our residents, we cannot simply accept the idea that government costs always grow faster than inflation, wages, or the economy. And we can't simply add or cut people within the same old approach to delivering services. We must be willing to do business in new ways. Some problems, such as health insurance and pension costs, may require action at the state level. But this does not mean progress is impossible, as we have seen with our apparent success in obtaining additional state aid for the town and schools. Because our local government is already very good, improvement will be difficult. To succeed, we must unite those who want to make it better with those who want to make it more efficient.

Respectfully submitted by David K. Stone, Chairman, Acton Finance Committee.



**TOWN OF ACTON
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING WARRANT**

Commonwealth of Massachusetts, ss.

To either of the Constables of the Town of Acton, Greetings:

In the name of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, you are hereby directed to notify the legal voters of said Town of Acton, qualified to vote at Town Meetings for the transaction of town affairs, to meet in their respective precincts to wit:

- Precinct 1 – Nagog Woods Club House – 100 Nonset Path
- Precinct 2 – Conant School – 80 Taylor Road
- Precinct 3 – Blanchard Auditorium, R. J. Grey Junior High School – 12 Charter Road
- Precinct 4 – Blanchard Auditorium, R. J. Grey Junior High School – 12 Charter Road
- Precinct 5 – Blanchard Auditorium, R. J. Grey Junior High School – 12 Charter Road
- Precinct 6 – Conant School – 80 Taylor Road

On **Tuesday, March 28, 2006 between 7:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M.**, by posting a copy of this Warrant by you attested, at each of the places as directed by vote of the Town, fourteen days at least before the twenty-eighth day of March 2006,

To bring their votes on one ballot for the following officers:

Moderator for one year, one Selectmen for three years, two members of the School Committee for three years, one Trustee of the Memorial Library for three years, two members of the Housing Authority for five years.

In addition, the Acton Water District will elect one Commissioner for three years and one Moderator for three years.

You are also to notify legal voters aforesaid to meet at the Acton-Boxborough Regional High School Auditorium in said Acton on **Monday, April 3, 2006 at 7:00 P.M.**, then and there to act on the following articles:

Legend

One or more of the following symbols may follow an Article number:

<u>Symbol</u>	<u>Description</u>
*	This article is on the Consent Calendar
#	This article submitted by Citizen Petition

Consent Calendar

In an effort to streamline Town Meeting, the Board of Selectmen has decided to continue the concept of a Consent Calendar. The use of this Calendar speeds the passage of articles which the Selectmen feel should generate no controversy and can be properly voted without debate. The purpose of the Consent Calendar is to allow motions under these articles to be acted upon as one unit and to be passed without debate.

The Consent Calendar will be taken up as the first order of business. Please do your homework. If you have any questions about the consent articles, motions or procedure, please feel free to contact the official listed in the summary of the article or to contact the Town Manager's Office, by e-mail at Manager@acton-ma.gov or by telephone at (978) 264-9612, before Town Meeting.

At the call of the Consent Calendar, the Moderator will call out the numbers of the Articles, one by one. If **two or more** voters object to any particular Article being included in the Consent Calendar, they should say the word "**Hold**" in a loud voice when the number is called. The Article will then be removed from the Consent Calendar and restored to its original place in the Warrant, to be debated and voted in the usual manner. After the calling of the individual items in the Consent Calendar, the Moderator will ask that all remaining articles be passed **as a unit** by the voters.

Please carefully review the list of articles and motions proposed for each Consent item that follows. Complete summaries are included with each article printed in this Warrant.

Consent Calendar Articles and Motions

Article 3 * Council on Aging Van Enterprise Budget

Move that the Town appropriate \$85,293 for the purpose of operating the Town of Acton Senior and Disabled Citizens Van service, and to raise such amount, \$41,210 be raised from department receipts, \$44,040 be raised from taxation and \$43 be transferred from retained earnings.

Article 4 * Nursing Enterprise Budget

Move that the Town appropriate \$642,110 for the purpose of operating the Town of Acton Public Health Nursing Service, and to raise such amount, \$463,160 be raised from department receipts and \$178,950 be transferred from retained earnings.

Article 5 * Septage Disposal Enterprise Budget

Move that the Town appropriate \$141,272 for the purpose of septage disposal, and to raise such amount, \$127,028 be raised from department receipts and \$14,244 be transferred from retained earnings.

Article 6 * Sewer Enterprise Budget

Move that the Town appropriate \$1,555,410 for the purpose of operating the sewer system, and to raise such amount, \$1,555,410 be raised from department receipts.

Article 7 * NESWC Enterprise Budget

Move that the Town appropriate \$562,249 for the purpose of solid waste disposal, and to raise such amount, \$562,249 be raised from department receipts.

Article 8 * Section 53E^{1/2} Self-Funding Programs

Move that the revolving funds for the Local School System, Historic District Commission, Building Department, Sealer of Weights and Measures, Health Department, and Fire Department be continued for FY07 in the amounts and for the purposes set forth in the expense column of this Article.

Article 9 * Chapter 90 Highway Reimbursement Program

Move that the Town Manager is authorized to accept Highway funds from all sources and that such funds are hereby appropriated for highway purposes.

Article 10 * Insurance Proceeds

Move that the Town Manager is authorized to accept insurance proceeds of any name and nature whatsoever from all sources and such funds are hereby appropriated.

Article 11 * Gifts or Grants

Move that the proceeds of any gifts or grants from any source accepted pursuant to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 44, Section 53A, and any interest thereon, are hereby appropriated for the stated purposes of the gifts or grants, and may be expended with the approval of the Board of Selectmen or otherwise as stated in Section 53A.

Article 12 * Federal and State Aid

Move that the Town Manager is authorized to accept federal and state reimbursement funds from all sources and that such funds are hereby appropriated for the purposes outlined by such reimbursement.

Article 13 * Performance Bonds

Move to appropriate the proceeds of any performance bonds, for the purposes stated in said bonds, available as a result of any default, non-performance or other covered conditions.

Article 14 * Sale of Foreclosed Properties

Move in the words of the Article.

Article 15 * Elderly Tax Relief – Reauthorize Chapter 73 of the Acts of 1986

Move that the Town continue to accept the provisions of Chapter 73 of the Acts of 1986, as amended by Chapter 126 of the Acts of 1988, providing for a 100% increase in certain property tax exemptions.

Article 23 * Town Board Support – Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council

Move that the Town raise and appropriate \$2,000 for the ongoing expenses of the Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council.

Article 32 * Amend Town Bylaws – Housekeeping

Move to adopt the general bylaw amendments as set forth in the Article.

Article 33 * Amend Town Bylaws – Rules and Regulations for ‘Carry-In’ Liquor

Move to adopt the general bylaw amendments as set forth in the Article.

Article 34 * Amend Town Bylaws – Use and Sale of Tobacco and Smoking Products

Move to adopt the general bylaw amendments as set forth in the Article.

Article 35 * Amend Town Bylaws – Non-Criminal Disposition for Zoning Bylaw

Move to adopt the general bylaw amendments as set forth in the Article.

Article 36 * Amend Town Bylaws – Hazardous Materials Control

Move to adopt the general bylaw amendments as set forth in the Article.

Article 37 * Amend Zoning Bylaw – Special Waste

Move to adopt the zoning bylaw amendments as set forth in the Article.

Article 41 * Amend Zoning Bylaw – Housekeeping

Move to adopt the zoning bylaw amendments as set forth in the Article.

Article 42 * Accept Streets – Jackson Drive & Monroe Drive

Move that the Town accept as a public way the street listed in the Article, as laid out by the Board of Selectmen, according to the plans on file with the Town Clerk, and authorize the Board of Selectmen to take the fee or easements for drainage, utility, or other purposes where shown on said plans or described in the Order of Layout.

Article 43 * Accept Sidewalk Easements – Martin and Maple Streets

Move that the Town authorize the acquisition of the easements as set forth in the Article.

Donald MacKenzie
Town Moderator

Articles

ARTICLE 1 CHOOSE TOWN OFFICERS

(Majority vote)

To choose all necessary Town Officers and Committees and to fix the salaries and compensation of all the elective officers of the Town as follows:

Moderator	\$ 20.00 per Town Meeting session
Board of Selectmen, Chairman	\$750.00 per year
Board of Selectmen, Member	\$650.00 per year

, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article provides for the election of Trustees of the Elizabeth White Fund, Trustees of the West Acton Fireman's Relief Fund, Trustees of the Goodnow Fund and Trustees of the Citizens' Library Association of West Acton and establishes the salaries of the Town's elected officials.

Selectman assigned: Peter K. Ashton: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

ARTICLE 2 HEAR AND ACCEPT REPORTS

(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will accept reports and hear and act upon the report of any committee chosen at any previous Town Meeting that has not already reported, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article provides for the acceptance of the Annual Town Report, any other reports Town Boards and Committees may need to offer, and to offer for acceptance, any reports of committees chosen at previous Town Meetings.

Selectman assigned: Peter K. Ashton: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

ARTICLE 3 * COUNCIL ON AGING VAN ENTERPRISE BUDGET
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds a sum of money to operate the Senior Van Service, in accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 44, Section 53 F½, Enterprise Fund Law, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article requests funding to operate the van service for use by senior citizens and disabled citizens of the Community. This 40-hour per week van service is funded by the Federal, State and Local Governments. 50% of the service is paid by Federal funds, 25% of the service is paid by the Commonwealth, and the final 25% is absorbed by the Town. Fare rates are determined by the Lowell Regional Transit Authority. Revenues will be used to reduce the Town’s share of total costs. If income in any year is in excess of expenses, the excess shall be deposited in a separate fund and used for capital expenditures of the Enterprise or to reduce user fees. Fund status is noted below (for Budget detail see Municipal Supplement).

Fund Balance 6/30/05	Budgeted Revenue FY06	Budgeted Expense FY06	Est. Fund Balance 6/30/06	Budgeted Revenue FY07	Budgeted Expense FY07	Est. Fund Balance 6/30/07
\$18,315	\$59,100	\$77,372	\$43	\$85,250	\$85,293	\$0

Direct inquiries to: Jean Fleming, Director, Council on Aging
SeniorCenter@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9643
Selectman assigned: Lauren Rosenzweig: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Finance Committee
 Recommended **Deferred**

ARTICLE 6 * SEWER ENTERPRISE BUDGET
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds a sum of money for the purpose of operating and maintaining a sewer collection and treatment facility, in accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 44, Section 53F½, Enterprise Fund Law, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article requests funding for operation of the municipal sewer system. Sewer charges, private sewer treatment plant fees, connection fees, sewer inspector fees, betterments, State and Federal aid for Sewers, and any other income derived from the operation of the municipal sewer system will be deposited in a separate account and may be expended to pay part or all of the anticipated costs of sewerage disposal for the system. If income in any year is in excess of expenses, the excess shall be deposited in a separate fund and used for capital expenditures of the enterprise fund or to reduce user fees.

Fund Balance 6/30/05	Budgeted Revenue FY06	Budgeted Expense FY06	Est. Fund Balance 6/30/06	Budgeted Revenue FY07	Budgeted Expense FY07	Est. Fund Balance 6/30/07
\$0	\$1,499,836	\$1,499,836	\$0	\$1,555,410	\$1,555,410	\$0

Direct inquiries to: John Murray, Assistant Town Manager
manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612

Selectman assigned: Lauren Rosenzweig: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations: Board of Selectmen Finance Committee
 Recommended **Deferred**

ARTICLE 7 * NESWC ENTERPRISE FUND
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, a sum of money for the purpose of solid waste disposal in accordance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 44, Section 53F½, Enterprise Fund Law, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article requests funding for the Town’s solid waste disposal and recycling operation. This will be the first full year of operations outside of the 20 year contract with the regional waste-to-energy facility in North Andover, which expired on September 25, 2005. This year’s requested budget funds the resident only, 5-day a week operation voted at the June 13, 2005 Special Town Meeting. The Citizens of Acton who use the Transfer Station fund 100% of the costs of operations from fees deposited in a separate account and expended to pay the expenses of solid waste disposal. If income in any year is in excess of expenses, the excess shall be deposited in a separate fund and used for future expenditures of the enterprise fund or to reduce user fees. Fund status is noted below (for Budget detail see Municipal Supplement).

Fund Balance 6/30/05	Revised Revenue FY06	Revised Expense FY06	Est. Fund Balance 6/30/06	Budgeted Revenue FY07	Budgeted Expense FY07	Est. Fund Balance 6/30/07
\$3,603,205	\$1,730,000	\$620,000	\$4,713,205	\$562,249	\$562,249	\$4,713,205

Direct inquiries to: John Murray, Assistant Town Manager
manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612

Selectman assigned: Peter K. Ashton: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations: **Board of Selectmen** **Finance Committee**
 Recommended **Deferred**

ARTICLE 8 * SECTION 53E½ SELF-FUNDING PROGRAMS
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 44, Section 53E½ to continue revolving funds for the Local School System, to be expended by the Superintendent of Schools; and for the Historic District Commission, Building Department, Sealer of Weights and Measures, Health Inspectional Services, Ambulance Fees and Fire Department Fire Alarm Network, to be expended by the Town Manager, as noted below:

Fund	FY07 Estimated Revenue	FY07 Authorized Expenditure
School Department		
Douglas at Dawn/Dusk	\$140,000	\$140,000
Merriam Mornings/Afternoons/Summer	\$200,000	\$200,000
Gates Amazing Programs	\$36,500	\$36,500
Historic District Commission	\$600	\$600
Building Department	\$179,856	\$179,856
Includes fees for Microfilming, Electrical Permits, Plumbing Permits, Gas Permits, Sign Licenses and Periodic Inspection Fees		
Sealer of Weights and Measures	\$10,734	\$10,734
Health Department		
Food Service Inspections	\$27,919	\$27,919
Hazardous Materials Inspections	\$51,944	\$51,944
Fire Department		
Fire Alarm Network	\$50,646	\$50,646
Ambulance Fees ♦	\$300,000	\$320,000

, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article allows the Schools and Town to fully fund the extended day/summer programs of the Local Schools, Historic District Commission activities, Building Department inspectional programs, Sealer of Weights and Measures services, specified ongoing Health inspectional programs, Ambulance Fees and the Town-wide Fire Alarm Network from their respective receipts and fund balance. This article removes the cost of these services from the tax base. Fees are deposited in a separate account and may be expended to pay part or all of the anticipated costs of operating each program. If income exceeds costs, the excess is retained for use of the specific program in any subsequent period.

♦ An example of removing cost from the tax base is to purchase emergency apparatus for Fire Department use from the Ambulance Fees Revolving Fund. This Fund was established to isolate medical response revenues and utilize them for the replacement of emergency medical response vehicles. For example, receipts from FY05, FY06 and FY07 will be combined to fund the purchase of a replacement ambulance and a replacement shift commander’s vehicle that are used as first-response vehicles to medical emergencies, and an emergency medical information system to improve efficiency in fire department communications.

(For Budget Detail, excluding School Programs, please see Municipal Budget Supplement)

	FY 2005 Actual Revenue	FY 2005 Actual Expense	Fund Balance 6/30/2005	FY 2006 Budgeted Revenue	FY 2006 Budgeted Expense	FY 2006 Est. Fund Balance	Actual Revenue 2/21/2006	Actual Expense 2/21/2006
School Department¹								
Douglas at Dawn/Dusk	\$172,885	\$135,632	\$116,614	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$116,614	\$117,721	\$86,403
Merriam Mornings/Afternoons/Summer	\$165,792	\$100,895	\$90,777	\$175,000	\$175,000	\$90,777	\$84,587	\$68,787
Gates Amazing Mornings/Afternoons	\$2,250	\$400	\$9,325	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$9,325	\$2,213	\$2,192
Historic District Commission²	\$160	\$175	\$614	\$600	\$600	\$614	\$180	\$38
Building Department²	\$90,054	\$85,181	\$60,508	\$161,222	\$161,222	\$60,508	\$75,982	\$54,163
Includes fees for Microfilming, Electrical Permits, Plumbing Permits, Gas Permits, Sign Licenses and Periodic Inspection Fees								
Sealer of Weights and Measures²	\$7,634	\$10,198	\$5,282	\$11,000	\$11,451	\$5,282	\$7,131	\$8,889
Health Department²								
Hazardous Materials Inspection	\$39,604	\$39,916	\$15,868	\$42,934	\$42,934	\$15,868	\$11,504	\$25,043
Food Service Inspections	\$23,765	\$20,693	\$27,701	\$25,189	\$25,189	\$27,701	\$32,533	\$14,110
Fire Department²								
Fire Alarm Network	\$42,541	\$74,672	\$57,688	\$50,508	\$50,508	\$57,688	\$1,728	\$32,430
Ambulance Fees	\$303,979	\$320,619	\$238,771	\$250,000	\$50,000	\$238,771	\$179,833	\$74,720

All Monetary Figures Rounded to the Nearest Dollar

Direct inquiries to: ¹ Bill Ryan, Superintendent of Schools: bryan@mail.ab.mec.edu / (978) 264-4700
² John Murray, Assistant Town Manager: manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612
 Selectman assigned: Lauren Rosenzweig: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

ARTICLE 9 * CHAPTER 90 HIGHWAY REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will vote to raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, a sum of money for highway improvements under the authority of Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 90, and any other applicable laws, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

Each year, the State provides communities with reimbursement for certain highway projects. The State Legislature annually establishes the level of highway improvement funds available to cities and towns under the so-called “Chapter 90” Program. This process is not completed until after Acton’s Annual Town Meeting; therefore, we are unable to specify a dollar amount at Town Meeting. State law requires that these State Highway Reimbursement Funds be appropriated by Town Meeting. The purpose of this article is to make that appropriation and allow the town to fully utilize whatever level of appropriation the State may make available during the upcoming fiscal year. If Town Meeting were to not adopt this article, it is conceivable that monies allocated to Acton may be redistributed to State projects or other cities and towns.

Direct inquiries to: John Murray, Assistant Town Manager
manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612
Selectman assigned: F. Doré Hunter: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

ARTICLE 10 * INSURANCE PROCEEDS
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the proceeds of any insurance policy reimbursements during FY07 of costs incurred as a result of any covered loss, including without limitation any liability insurance, property insurance, casualty insurance, workers' compensation insurance, health insurance, disability insurance, automobile insurance, police and fire injury and medical costs, and any other insurance of any name and nature whatsoever, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

According to Massachusetts General Law, reimbursements received from insurance carriers in excess of \$20,000 require appropriation. This article would authorize the Town Manager to expend such reimbursements.

Direct inquiries to: John Murray, Assistant Town Manager
manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612
Selectman assigned: Walter M. Foster: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

ARTICLE 13 * PERFORMANCE BONDS

(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate the proceeds of any performance bonds for the purposes stated in said bonds available as a result of any default, non-performance or other covered conditions, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

The Department of Revenue has issued an opinion that the Town cannot expend performance bonds without appropriation. This article would authorize the Town Manager to expend funds secured from performance bonds provided by or on behalf of contractors and others to secure the performance of obligations by such persons to the Town.

Direct inquiries to: John Murray, Assistant Town Manager
manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612

Selectman assigned: Walter M. Foster: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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ARTICLE 14 * SALE OF FORECLOSED PROPERTIES

(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to dispose of foreclosed properties acquired by the Town for nonpayment of taxes in accordance with the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article grants authority to the Board of Selectmen to sell and convey properties that the Town has obtained via tax foreclosure.

Direct inquiries to: John Murray, Assistant Town Manager
manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612

Selectman assigned: F. Doré Hunter: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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ARTICLE 15 * ELDERLY TAX RELIEF
(Majority vote) **REAUTHORIZE CHAPTER 73 OF THE ACTS OF 1986**

To see if the Town will vote to continue to accept the provisions of Chapter 73 of the Acts of 1986, as amended by Chapter 126 of the Acts of 1988, providing for a 100% increase in certain property tax exemptions, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This is a reauthorization of an ongoing program of tax relief for certain qualifying individuals that was first adopted by Town Meeting in 1999. Section 4 of Chapter 73 of the Acts of 1986 authorized Towns that annually accept the provisions of this law to grant additional real estate tax exemptions for qualifying individuals. These additional exemptions are available to the elderly, disabled or veterans who qualify for property tax exemptions under Clauses 17, 17C, 17C½, 17D, 22, 22A, 22B, 22C, 22D, 22E, 37, 37A, 41, 41B and 41C of Section 5, Chapter 59 of the Massachusetts General Laws. This article will continue to provide additional tax relief to qualified individuals by increasing the exemptions to the maximum allowable under the law.

Direct inquiries to: Brian McMullen, Assistant Assessor
assessor@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9622
Selectman assigned: Peter K. Ashton: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations: **Board of Selectmen** **Finance Committee**
 Recommended **Deferred**

ARTICLE 16 IMPLEMENT NEW LEGISLATION REGARDING SENIOR TAX RELIEF
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will vote, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 136, Section 1 of the Acts of 2005, to reduce the rate of interest that accrues on property taxes deferred by eligible seniors under Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 59, Section 5, Clause 41A from 8% to the Primary Discount Rate set by the Federal Reserve Bank Boston as of January 1, with such reduced rate to apply to such taxes assessed for any fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2006 unless and until said rate is further amended by Town Meeting, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

Acceptance of this article will allow the Town to charge a reduced interest rate for seniors seeking a personal real estate tax deferral under Clause 41A of Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 59, Section 5. This article will provide additional tax relief to qualified individuals by decreasing the interest rate allowed under the new law.

Direct inquiries to: John Murray, Assistant Town Manager
manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612
Selectman assigned: Peter K. Ashton: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations: **Board of Selectmen** **Finance Committee**
 Recommended **Deferred**

To see if the Town will petition the General Court to adopt a home rule act authorizing Senior Tax Relief in the Town of Acton in substantially the form set forth below:

AN ACT RELATIVE TO PROPERTY TAX RELIEF FOR SENIOR CITIZENS IN THE TOWN OF ACTON

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1: Notwithstanding the provisions of sections 57 through 57(c) of chapter 59 of the General Laws, whenever the date for which real property taxes are due and payable in the Town of Acton falls on or between the 25th day of a month and the third day of the following month, said date for real property taxes on property owned and occupied as a primary residence by a person sixty-five years of age or older (“Eligible Senior Citizen”), either individually or jointly or as a tenant-in-common with another , shall be extended to the fourth day of said following month, subject to section nine of chapter 4 of the General Laws (Sundays and holidays).

SECTION 2: In the event that the United States Social Security Administration changes the date on which it mails social security benefit checks from the first day of each month to another day of the month, the Town Treasurer of the Town of Acton is hereby authorized to modify the due and payable date set forth in Section 1 above, so that said due and payable date for Eligible Senior Citizens falls on the fourth day after Social Security benefit checks are mailed to recipients whenever the due and payable date would have otherwise fallen between the fifth day preceding the mailing of social security benefit checks and the third day following the mailing of social security benefit checks.

Or to take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this Article is to request authorization from the State to grant Senior Citizens extra time to make quarterly property tax payments to the Town so that the timing of these payments will coincide with receipt of Social Security checks by seniors. If passed, this act would help seniors to pay their quarterly tax bills upon receipt of Social Security payments without being assessed penalties and interest.

Direct inquiries to: John Murray, Assistant Town Manager
manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612

Selectman assigned: Peter K. Ashton: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

B. Financial Analyst

This is a new position in the Finance Department to assist the other decentralized Town Departments with issues/questions on our master finance system re: accounting, payroll, purchase orders, and budgets. The objective of this position is to insure that data is being correctly entered and properly categorized by all non-finance departments so that Finance can effectively insure proper appropriation controls; all Town finance information would be accurately tracked, analyzed and reported throughout the year for the Manager's office, the Board of Selectmen, Town Meeting, and better meet our statutory obligations to the State, as necessary and appropriate. This will allow Finance management and the Town Manager's office to focus on the substantive matters of pro-active planning and analysis for the Town.

Direct inquiries to: Stephen G. Barrett, CPA, Finance Director
Finance@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9617

C. Web Site Content Administrator

This article requests one-half of the funds required for a new IT position that will be charged with the responsibility of meeting the increasing demands for up-to-date information on the Town's public web site. This individual will upgrade the web site to the latest content management technology, organize our web pages, site map our public services and information, manage and update site content in a timely manner to better serve our public with meeting schedules, times, locations, minutes, Town Meeting and election results, applications and fee structures, handouts, brochures, manuals, rules and regulations, recreation programs and special event notices. The other half of the funds needed for this position will come from contractual payments made by cable companies to the Town.

Direct inquiries to: Mark Hald, Director of Information Technology
IT@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9606

D. Government Channel / IT Systems Technician

This article requests one-half of the funds required for a new IT position that will be primarily charged with two responsibilities: 1) creating and maintaining programming and informational content on the Town's cable TV channel on the Town's one or more cable television providers and 2) providing IT services to all Town departments, namely, working with municipal end-users to service & solve any of their application problems with respect to their desktop computers, printer selections and integration of alternative printing sources, and Town Hall copier issues. The IT Department is responsible for all areas of technology in the Municipal Government, such as maintaining the financial software systems, electronic mail, file and print servers, desktop systems, printers, the wide-area network, security, disaster recovery, performance monitoring, maintenance, data analysis, supplies monitoring, training coordination, software updates, document management and communications. The other half of the funds needed for this position will come from contractual payments made by cable companies to the Town.

Direct inquiries to: Mark Hald, Director of Information Technology
IT@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9606

E. Council on Aging Program Coordinator

The Town has funded 15 hours for this position since the Senior Center opened in 1994, while the number of senior citizens (60+) has grown by over 25% and the number of programs offered by the Council on Aging by over 50%. As the "baby boomers" turn 60, the need and demand for more varied classes and programs will grow. More staffing hours are needed to plan stimulating new programs, recruit and supervise instructors, collaborate with neighboring Councils and increase public awareness.

Direct inquiries to: Jean Fleming, Director, Council on Aging
SeniorCenter@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9643

F. Two Highway Equipment Operators

Over the past 20 years, the staffing level of the Highway Department has been reduced from 21 full-time employees to 16. Two of these positions were eliminated in the last two years. The addition of two equipment operators will help restore the overall efficiency of the Highway Department as it undertakes its mission to maintain our roadways, plow snow, run the transfer station and provide construction services to other Town of Acton Departments. With the requested staff, the Town will be able to perform day-to-day tasks and implement new projects, such as sidewalk construction, with “in-house” personnel and be less dependent on outside, more costly, contractors.

Direct inquiries to: Bruce Stamski, Director of Public Works / Town Engineer
Engineering@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9628

Selectman assigned: Walter M. Foster: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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ARTICLE 20 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS – EQUIPMENT

(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, a sum of money to be expended by the Town Manager for the replacement or improvement of facilities and equipment as listed below:

A.	Global Positioning System (GPS) Equipment	\$42,000
B.	Elm Street Field Lights and Poles Replacement	\$70,000
C.	One-Ton Dump Truck with Plow	\$20,000
D.	Recondition Fire Department Ladder 28	<u>\$30,000</u>
Total		\$162,000

, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARIES

A. Global Positioning System (GPS) Equipment

The GPS equipment is the first basic tool needed to begin the process of transforming our mapping and land records system from an antiquated set of hand-drawn maps to a computerized geographic information system (GIS). This equipment utilizes satellites combined with a fixed land base station to accurately locate parcels, roads, etc. for inclusion into a GIS mapping system.

Direct inquiries to: Bruce Stamski, Director of Public Works / Town Engineer
Engineering@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9628

B. Elm Street Field Lights and Poles Replacement

Replace the field lights and poles at the Elm Street softball field. The project would involve the removal of eight light poles and their replacement with four 65-foot poles and new lights. The current lights are more than 30 years old, the poles show signs of rot, and have exceeded their useful life. This project has high priority as the poles could become a public safety hazard to persons or property. We have collaborated with the Acton Adult Softball League for fundraising efforts. Pop Warner Football has also expressed strong interest in fundraising.

Direct inquiries to: Tom Tidman, Natural Resources Director
NR@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9631

C. One-Ton Dump Truck with Plow

This article requests one-half (1/2) of the funds necessary to replace a 1995 maintenance truck, with a one-ton dump truck. The new vehicle will be used extensively to haul mowing equipment to maintain our municipal recreation facilities including NARA Park, as well as to maintain the cemeteries and conservation lands. In addition, this vehicle will be used by the Highway Department each winter for snow plowing Acton’s roads. The other half of the funds necessary to purchase this truck will come from Cemetery Trust Funds.

Direct inquiries to: Tom Tidman, Natural Resources Director
NR@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9631

D. Recondition Fire Department Ladder 28

This article will provide funding to accomplish specific reconditioning work on Ladder 28. Ladder 28 is the Town’s only aerial ladder truck operated by the Acton Fire Department. This truck is a 1993 truck. It is a vital piece of fire apparatus for fire and rescue purposes. The specific reconditioning work is necessary to retain safety, service, reliability, certification, and to extend the longevity of this unit for a few more years. Primarily the reconditioning will consist of rust repair and repainting of various portions of the body of the truck and preventative repair and repainting of the aerial ladder portion of the truck.

Direct inquiries to: Robert C. Craig, Fire Chief
Fire@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9645

Selectman assigned: F. Doré Hunter: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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ARTICLE 21 TOWN OPERATING BUDGET

(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, a sum of money to defray the necessary expenses of the departments, offices and boards of the Town, exclusive of the school budgets, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article requests funds for the fiscal year 2007 (July 1, 2006-June 30, 2007) Municipal Operating Budget. The Municipal Budget also includes certain school costs. These are primarily the costs of debt service requirements; property, liability and contents insurance on school buildings; pension costs and Workers’ Compensation Insurance for school employees, other than teachers and Regional school employees. The standard motion for the Municipal Budget appropriation under this article typically includes the transfer of monies such as Cemetery Trust Funds and Wetland Filing Fees. Budget detail provided in the Municipal Budget Supplement is available at the Memorial Library, West Acton Citizens’ Library, Public Safety Facility, Town Hall and at the Polling Places on March 28, 2006. Copies will also be available at Town Meeting.

Direct inquiries to: Don P. Johnson, Town Manager
manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612

Selectman assigned: Peter K. Ashton: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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ARTICLE 22
(Majority vote)

COMMUNITY PRESERVATION PROGRAM
DIRECT APPROPRIATIONS FROM FUND BALANCE

To see if the Town will vote to appropriate or to set aside for later appropriation, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen and the Town Manager to expend or set aside, from the FY 2005 Community Preservation Fund balance as set forth herein, the following amounts for community preservation purposes, with such expenditures to be subject to conditions to be specified in award letters from the Community Preservation Committee, with each item considered a separate appropriation:

FY 2005 COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUND BALANCE	
Community Preservation Fund Surcharge Collected in FY 2005	\$ 573,503.55
State Community Preservation Trust Fund Receipt, October 2005	\$ 568,164.00
Interest Earned FY 2005	\$ 29,416.76
Unencumbered funds from FY 2004 Fund Balance	\$ 65,591.21
Total - FY 2005 Community Preservation Fund Balance	\$1,236,675.52
APPROPRIATIONS	
Purpose	Recommended Amounts
Set Aside Appropriation – Open Space	
A. Acquisition, creation, and preservation of Open Space, and its rehabilitation and restoration	\$ 400,000.00
Spending Appropriations	
B. Land Acquisition & Development – 28 Willow & 214 Central St.	\$ 160,000.00
C. Recreational Area at McCarthy Village	\$ 22,000.00
D. Rental Housing Planning and Feasibility Study	\$ 25,000.00
E. New Basketball Courts at Douglas School, Elm Street	\$ 20,000.00
F. Leary Field Woodland Path	\$ 25,000.00
G. New Gates School Playground	\$ 16,000.00
H. Site Preparation and Construction - Habitat for Humanity Home	\$ 35,000.00
I. Jones Tavern Roof and Gutters Replacement	\$ 41,000.00
J. Historic Stone Chamber Restoration	\$ 20,000.00
K. Bruce Freeman Rail Trail Design	\$ 175,000.00
L. Fitzgerald Piano Preservation	\$ 18,000.00
M. School Street Twin Ball Fields	\$ 69,000.00
N. Town Hall Slate Roof Replacement	\$ 65,470.00
O. Arboretum Universal Access Trail	\$ 24,000.00
Administrative Spending Appropriation	
P. A fund reimbursing the Town of Acton for administrative services and operating expenses provided in support of the Community Preservation Committee	\$ 57,083.40
Total Recommended Appropriations	\$1,172,553.40
Remaining FY 2005 fund balance	\$ 64,122.12

And, whereas Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 44B requires that the Town appropriate for spending, or set-aside for future spending, from the fund balance at least 10% for open space, 10% for historic preservation, and 10% for community housing.

And, whereas the recommended appropriations for open space, historic preservation, and community housing each exceed 10% of the Community Preservation Fund balance.

And, whereas Town Meeting may vote to delete or reduce any of the recommended amounts.

Therefore, in the event that recommended amounts are deleted or reduced, vote to appropriate as a set-aside for future spending from the FY 2005 Community Preservation Fund Balance the minimum necessary amounts to allocate not less than 10% (\$123,667.60) for open space, not less than 10% (\$123,667.60) for historic preservation, and not less than 10% (\$123,667.60) for community housing.

, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article would make appropriations from the Town's Community Preservation Fund. In 2002, the Town adopted the Community Preservation Act, Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 44B (M.G.L. Ch. 44B). This established Acton's Community Preservation Fund through a 1.5% annual surcharge on real estate property tax bills with certain exemptions, and made the Town eligible to receive annually additional monies from the Massachusetts Community Preservation Trust Fund, which are added to the Town's Community Preservation Fund. Under the law, the Community Preservation Fund may be used to acquire, create and preserve open space; to acquire, preserve, rehabilitate, and restore historic resources; to create, preserve and support community housing; to acquire, create and preserve land for recreational use; and for certain related expenses in support of the foregoing. Community housing is defined as housing for low- and moderate-income individuals and families. This is the third year of appropriations from Acton's Community Preservation Fund.

Local adoption of the Community Preservation Act established the Acton Community Preservation Committee as a statutory committee under the Act (Chapter S of the Bylaws of the Town of Acton). The Community Preservation Committee's duties under the law are to study the needs, possibilities, resources, and preferences of the Town regarding community preservation; to engage in an open and public process of deliberation and consult with other Town Boards and Committees; and to make recommendations to Town Meeting for appropriations from the Community Preservation Fund.

In September 2005, the Community Preservation Committee published its 2006 Community Preservation Plan with guidelines for the submission of projects seeking funding. By November 14, 2005, it had received sixteen applications for funding of proposed items and projects. The Committee reviewed all proposals, interviewed proponents, and solicited legal opinions on the proposals to help evaluate their eligibility under M.G.L. Ch. 44B. This article represents the Committee's recommendation for appropriations from the Community Preservation Fund balance. All recommended amounts are "up-to" spending limits. Savings, if any, will be available for future appropriations. All projects that were proposed to the Community Preservation Committee have been recommended for funding, though some of the recommended projects have not been recommended at the funding level that their proponents had requested. The recommended appropriations leave a remaining fund balance of \$64,122.12 that is available for future Town Meeting appropriations under the Community Preservation Act.

Under M.G.L. Ch. 44B, Town Meeting may delete or reduce any of the recommended appropriations, but may not add new items or increase the recommended appropriations. However, M.G.L. Ch. 44B requires that the Community Preservation Committee recommends in each fiscal year the spending of not less than 10% of the annual revenues in the Community Preservation Fund for each of the following: open space (not including land for active recreation purposes); historic preservation; and community housing. The Committee may also recommend the taking by the Town of interest in real property, the set-aside of funds for later spending, and appropriation of not more than 5% of the annual revenues of the Community Preservation Fund for the Committee's administrative and operating expenses.

A. Open Space Set-Aside

This item sets aside a fund from which Town Meeting may appropriate spending in future years for the purpose of acquisition, creation, and preservation of open space and the rehabilitation and restoration of such open space. Together with the previous years' open space set-aside appropriations, the recommended amount will bring the balance in the open space set-aside to \$900,000.

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

B. Land Acquisition and Development – 28 Willow Street & 214 Central Street

This recommended appropriation will provide funding to the Acton Community Housing Corporation (ACHC) for the acquisition of property located at 28 Willow and 214 Central Streets, and will help cover other costs that the ACHC may incur relative to the development of up to three units of community housing on said property. The Town of Acton is the current property owner. The property is shown on the 2004 Town Atlas plate F-2B as parcels 64 and 65. The total acquisition cost will be around \$202,500. The ACHC will pay \$42,500 from existing affordable housing gift funds. With State Priority Development Funding the ACHC has completed a feasibility study for a community housing project on the property and advanced preliminary plans in consultation with the surrounding residents. The ACHC has received site approval for the project from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development under the Local Initiative Program. An application for the project will be submitted to the Board of Appeals for a Comprehensive Permit under M.G.L. c. 40B.

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

C. Recreational Area at McCarthy Village

The Acton Housing Authority (AHA) owns McCarthy Village and rents its 35 housing units to low-income families and individuals. McCarthy Village is located on Sachem Way off Great Road just north of Harris Street. In 2005 Town Meeting appropriated \$20,000 of CPA funds to the AHA for the design and construction of a recreation area at McCarthy Village to benefit the residents who live there. The AHA used about \$4,500 for design. The project construction is now more accurately priced at about \$42,000. This recommended appropriation will help close the funding gap. The design includes spaces for Volleyball, Basketball, Tether Ball, Four Square, walkways, benches, and picnic tables. It is expected that the remaining funding gap of \$4,500 can be closed by redesigning and slightly reducing the project size. There are currently no recreational or playground facilities at McCarthy Village.

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

D. Rental Housing Planning and Feasibility Study

Housing authorities are closely regulated by the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development. Until recently, housing authorities could not access private funding sources. Regulatory changes in September 2005 have opened new opportunities. The new rules give housing authorities more flexibility to leverage from and partner with private resources. The Acton Housing Authority (AHA) seeks to retain professional advice on how it can best use and apply the new rules to maintain and expand its current rental housing inventory. This recommended appropriation to the AHA is to fund the study. The disbursement of funds shall be subject to approval by the Community Preservation Committee or its designee of a detailed and adequate study scope of services.

Recommendations: **Board of Selectmen** **Finance Committee**
 Recommended **Deferred**

E. Basketball Court at Douglas School, Elm Street

Two old basketball courts presently exist at Elm Street near the Douglas School in West Acton. They have deteriorated beyond repair, are considered unsafe to use, and are therefore no longer a recreational asset. This recommended appropriation to the Acton Public Schools will help fund the creation of two new state-of-the-art outdoor basketball courts. Construction will involve the complete demolition and removal of all existing equipment and surfaces, preparation and grading of the subsurface, new asphalt, and new basketball equipment. There are no other outdoor basketball courts in Acton. The total project cost is estimated at \$40,000. It is anticipated that the Acton Schools will contribute \$6,000, and that private funding sources will make up the remaining \$14,000.

Recommendations: **Board of Selectmen** **Finance Committee**
 Recommended **Deferred**

F. Leary Field Woodland Path

This recommended appropriation to the Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools will build a walkway from the upper school parking lot to the new Leary Field. The path will be accessible for persons with disabilities. It was an integral component of the Leary Field project that Town Meeting helped fund with a CPA appropriation last year. However, it was not built due to the higher than expected costs of other project elements.

Recommendations: **Board of Selectmen** **Finance Committee**
 Recommended **Deferred**

G. Gates School Playground

This recommended appropriation to the Acton Public Schools will help fund the creation of a brand new playground structure at the Gates School in West Acton with a total estimated cost of \$44,000. It will completely replace an existing older structure made of pressure-treated wood that no longer meets safety standards and has deteriorated to a point where it is considered unsafe. The Acton School Committee has voted to contribute \$10,000. An additional \$18,000 is anticipated from private funding sources and in-kind services and volunteer labor.

Recommendations: **Board of Selectmen** **Finance Committee**
 Recommended **Deferred**

H. Site Preparation and Construction - Habitat for Humanity Home

This recommended appropriation to Habitat for Humanity will assist Habitat with the cost of site preparation and general construction of a new home in Acton for a low- to moderate-income family or household. The cash cost of a typical Habitat home in this area is about \$100,000. Habitat has raised funds from private donations and will continue to do so to complete the project. In addition Habitat is seeking a donation of the land, in kind contributions from professional contractors, and expects to rely hundreds of volunteer hours. The disbursement of CPA funds shall be subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Habitat shall own a property in Acton, or have secured a legally binding interest to acquire a property in Acton with an instrument sufficient in the opinion of the Board of Selectmen or its designee;
- (2) Said property shall have been found suitable and appropriate for an affordable housing unit by the Acton Board of Selectmen, which determination the Board of Selectmen may make based on location, neighborhood context, site conditions, and other relevant factors;
- (3) Habitat shall have received a building permit for the home on the accepted property;
- (4) Habitat shall grant to the Town of Acton an affordable housing deed restriction for said home and property that is in form and contents acceptable to the Board of Selectmen or its designee;
- (5) Specifically, the affordable housing deed restriction shall limit the unit to qualifying purchasers at initial sale and upon resale with a combined household income at or below 55% of the Boston Primary Metropolitan Statistical Area median income; and the restriction shall run with the home and property in perpetuity.

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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I. Jones Tavern Roof and Gutters

Jones Tavern in South Acton Village is an important historic and cultural resource in Acton. The pre-revolutionary tavern is on the National Register of Historic Places. Iron Work Farm in Acton, Inc. is an educational non-profit historical corporation, and has owned the property since 1964. This recommended appropriation to Iron Work Farm will provide funds to replace the Jones Tavern roof, gutters and downspouts. The estimated total project cost is \$49,000. Iron Work Farm will pay \$8,000. Last year Town meeting appropriated CPA funds to restore the Tavern’s four chimneys. This project is the second phase of capital investments that will help secure the historic building. The disbursement of funds shall be subject to an amendment of the existing preservation restriction to reflect the additional grant of CPA funds.

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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ARTICLE 24 ACTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS BUDGET

(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, a sum of money to defray the necessary expenses of the Acton Public School System, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article requests funds for fiscal year 2007 (July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007) for the Town of Acton Local Schools' Operating Budget.

Direct inquiries to: Bill Ryan, Superintendent of Schools
bryan@mail.ab.mec.edu / (978) 264-4700

Selectman assigned: Lauren Rosenzweig: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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ARTICLE 25 ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ASSESSMENT

(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will raise and appropriate, or appropriate from available funds, a sum of money to defray the necessary expenses of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article requests funds for fiscal year 2007 (July 1, 2006 through June 30, 2007) for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Assessment. This assessment, voted by the Acton-Boxborough Regional District School Committee, is governed by the terms of the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District Agreement.

Direct inquiries to: Bill Ryan, Superintendent of Schools
bryan@mail.ab.mec.edu / (978) 264-4700

Selectman assigned: Lauren Rosenzweig: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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Acton Fire Department or for any other philanthropic purpose consistent in the judgment of the trustees with the mission of the Acton Fire Department.

- f. Said Trustees are authorized to receive additional funds from any source and when so received shall be deposited with the Fund and administered in the same manner as the Fund.
 - g. Said Trustees shall make a report in writing annually to the Town and such report shall be published in the town report.
3. Pending final court approval of the foregoing, the Trustees of the “Acton Fireman’s Relief Fund” and the Trustees of the “West Acton Fireman’s Relief Fund” shall continue to administer their respective trust funds. Upon final court approval, the Trustees of said funds shall authorize and direct the Town treasurer to transfer all funds held in Account No. T-02 and Account No. T-32 to the Fund.
4. Upon final court approval of the foregoing, the Trustees of the “Acton Fireman’s Relief Fund” shall serve as the Trustees of the Fund pending the initial selection by Town Meeting of the Trustees of the Fund and no longer.

Or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

The Town is currently the holder of two separate Firefighter Relief Funds. Fireman Relief Fund T-02 had a balance of \$183,140.32 as of June 30, 2005, of which \$9,830 is non-expendable and \$173,310.32 is expendable. The West Acton Firefighter Relief Fund T-32 had a balance of \$15,095.93 as of June 30, 2005, all of which is expendable. Subject to Town Meeting and Court approval, the Trustees of the funds, in cooperation with representatives of the Acton firefighters, propose to consolidate the funds into a single trust fund with a unified statement of philanthropic purpose and a single set of Trustees to be chosen by Town Meeting.

Direct inquiries to: John Murray, Assistant Town Manager
manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612

Selectman assigned: F. Doré Hunter: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

ARTICLE 28 HOME RULE PETITION – NESWC ENTERPRISE FUND
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will petition the General Court to adopt a home rule act authorizing the transfer from the NESWC Enterprise Fund to the General Fund of all or a portion of the fund balance substantially in the form set forth below, or to take any other action relative thereto:

AN ACT RELATIVE TO THE NESWC ENTERPRISE FUND BALANCE IN THE TOWN OF ACTON

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1: Notwithstanding the provisions of section 53F1/2 of chapter 44 of the General Laws or of any other general or special law, given the expiration of the Town of Acton’s Service Agreement governing its participation in a regional solid waste program relating to the North East Solid Waste Committee established under Chapter 328 of the Acts of 1988, as amended, the Town of Acton is hereby authorized from time to time to transfer from the Town’s NESWC Enterprise Fund to the Town’s General Fund all or a portion of the remaining NESWC Enterprise Fund balance, by majority vote of the Town Meeting, and to appropriate said funds for other municipal purposes.

SECTION 2. This Act shall take effect upon its passage and shall apply to and ratify any such vote of the 2006 Acton Town Meeting or any subsequent annual or special Town Meeting.

SUMMARY

The Department of Revenue has advised that the Town cannot transfer monies from an Enterprise Fund to the General Fund without special legislation. The Town has determined that it has a surplus in the NESWC Enterprise Fund. This Article requests authorization from the State to make a transfer between the Funds, and if authorized, a future Town Meeting would take up an amount to be transferred.

Direct inquiries to: John Murray, Assistant Town Manager
manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612

Selectman assigned: F. Doré Hunter: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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ARTICLE 29 TRANSFER REAL PROPERTY – 28 WILLOW ST / 214 CENTRAL ST
(Two-thirds vote)

To see if the Town will vote to transfer the real property at 28 Willow Street and 214 Central Street, Acton, MA, which was taken by the Town for nonpayment taxes in Land Court Case Nos. 112320 T.L. and 112319 T.L. (Judgments dated May 4, 1998), and which is held for municipal purposes as provided by Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 60, Section 77, from the tax title custodian to the Board of Selectmen for the purpose of conveyance, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to convey such real property on such terms and conditions and for such consideration, which may include non-monetary consideration, as the Selectmen may determine, to the Acton Community Housing Corporation (“ACHC”), a non-profit housing corporation subject to the supervision of the Board of Selectmen pursuant to Chapter 143 of the Acts of 1996, for purposes of re-conveyance by ACHC, with the approval of the Board of Selectmen, to a qualified developer of affordable housing, selected pursuant to a Request for Proposals (“RFP”), which RFP shall specify restrictions on the subsequent use of the property for residential and affordable housing purposes,

or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article authorizes the transfer of two abutting parcels, taken by the Town for taxes and remediated by the Town under the direction of a licensed site professional, to the Acton Community Housing Corporation for the development of up to three units of housing in two buildings to be newly constructed on the property. The conveyance from the Town to ACHC would be subject to the approval of the Selectmen, as would the authorization for re-conveyance of the property by ACHC to a private developer pursuant to an RFP process. Reuse restrictions imposed in the RFP will require the developer to construct the housing in accordance with ACHC’s requirements, to restrict units in perpetuity for affordable housing purposes, and to conform to the Board of Appeals’s conditions imposed in a c. 40B permitting process. ACHC has reviewed the proposed building designs with neighbors, many of whom have expressed support for the project.

Direct inquiries to: Nancy Tavernier, Acton Community Housing Corporation
ACHC@acton-ma.gov / (978) 263-9611

Selectman assigned: F. Doré Hunter: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

ARTICLE 30 TRANSFER REAL PROPERTY – 74 RIVER STREET
(Two-thirds vote)

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to transfer the real property shown as parcel 46 on Map H-3A of the 2005 edition of the Town Atlas, which land is currently held for general municipal purposes or for other specific municipal purposes for which it has heretofore been devoted, from the tax title custodian to the Board of Selectmen for the purpose of conveyance, and to authorize the Board of Selectmen to convey such land for affordable housing purposes on such terms and conditions and for such consideration, which may be non-monetary consideration, as the Selectmen may determine,

, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article transfers control of a 0.6-acre parcel of town-owned land at 74 River Street to the Board of Selectmen so that they may convey it to a third party. The Selectmen’s stated intent is to offer this land for the non-profit development of a single or two-family affordable home, such as that envisioned by the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity North Central Massachusetts, Inc. Such a cooperative, nonprofit affordable housing development strategy will result in all site housing counting toward the Town’s state-mandated requirement for affordable housing units, as compared to a market-rate offering of the parcel whereby a 40B proposal could result in the development of three market-rate units for every one affordable unit. Cost benefits may also be realized by volunteer support, contributions and community involvement. The 74 River Street parcel is located in the South Acton Smart Growth district and within walking distance of the South Acton village center and public transportation.

Direct inquiries to: Andrew Magee, Member, Board of Selectmen
 AMagee@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9611

Selectman assigned: Andrew Magee: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

ARTICLE 32 * AMEND TOWN BYLAWS – HOUSEKEEPING
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter D10 of the general Bylaws of the Town by adding the letter “a.” before the first paragraph of Section D10.5 (Sewer Privilege Fees) and by adding the following new paragraphs as Sections D10.5.b and D10.5.c, respectively:

b. The Sewer Commissioners may establish reasonable fees pursuant to G.L. c. 83, § 17, to cover costs of construction of common sewers and other facilities required to serve land previously assessed a sewer betterment based on its existing use and/or its existing zoning potential where such land is later developed and/or subdivided for more intensive use (such as through a comprehensive permit under G.L. c. 40B, a zoning change, a subdivision, an approval not required plan, or other means). This fee shall be calculated based on the number of Sewer Assessment Units attributable to the intensified use of the land minus the number of Sewer Assessment Units originally assessed to the land, and may be adjusted by such other factors as the Sewer Commissioners, by regulation promulgated pursuant to this bylaw, determine to be appropriate. This fee shall be paid before any sewer connection permit or building permit is issued for the intensified use or, if a sewer connection permit or building permit is not required for the intensified use, before that use is commenced. The Sewer Commissioners may, by regulation promulgated pursuant to this bylaw, divide this fee among the land involved.

c. The fees charged under this Section may be applied by the Sewer Commissioners in their discretion to the costs of construction of the common sewers and other facilities, the debt service with respect thereto, and other costs and expenses of the sewer system as appropriate.

Or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

The proposed housekeeping article which contains Bylaw amendments would remove any ambiguity as to authorizing a Sewer Privilege Fee to be imposed on land where use is intensified after the original issuance of actual betterment assessments. Such intensification of use can occur in a variety of ways, such as the issuance of a comprehensive permit under Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 40B, the approval of a zoning change, an approval not required plan, or the issuance of a subdivision approval.

Direct inquiries to: John Murray, Assistant Town Manager
manager@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9612

Selectman assigned: Peter K. Ashton: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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ARTICLE 35 * AMEND TOWN BYLAWS
(Majority vote) **NON-CRIMINAL DISPOSITION FOR ZONING BYLAW**

To see if the Town will vote to amend Section E45 (Non-Criminal Disposition) of Chapter E (General Public Regulations) of the Bylaws of the Town by replacing the following line:

Chapter M - Zoning Bylaw; enforcing person - Building Commissioner – Fine \$25.00.

With a new line that reads:

Chapter M - Zoning Bylaw; enforcing person - Building Commissioner – Fine \$25.00 first offense; \$50.00 second offense; \$100.00 each subsequent offense.

Or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article changes the penalty for violations of the Acton Zoning Bylaw that can be assessed by the Building Commissioner. Currently, the penalty for first and subsequent violations that can be assessed under the non-criminal Bylaw is \$25. As proposed, the first offense would still be \$25 while the second offense will be \$50 and the third and all subsequent offenses would be \$100. All fines collected are deposited into the General Fund.

Direct inquiries to: Garry A. Rhodes, Building Commissioner
building@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9632

Selectman assigned: F. Doré Hunter: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

ARTICLE 36 * AMEND TOWN BYLAWS – HAZARDOUS MATERIALS CONTROL
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will vote to amend Chapter I of the general Bylaws of the Town as follows:

In Sections 1.3.4, 2.1.1, 2.1.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2.3(a), 3.5.1(e), 4, 4.1.1, 5.1.2 and 6.2.2 add the phrase “**or special wastes**” after wherever the words “**hazardous materials or wastes**” occur,

In Sections 1.3.1, 2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.3, 3.1, 4.2.1, 5.1.1 and 5.3.2 add the phrase “**or special waste**” after wherever the words “**hazardous materials or waste**” occur,

In Sections 1.3.6, 1.3.9, 1.3.10, 2.1.5, 2.4.1, 2.4.2 and 3.11(2) add the phrase “**or special waste**” after wherever the words “**hazardous material or waste**” occur,

In Sections 3.3.1, 3.2, 3.2.2, 3.4, 3.5.1(d) and 6.2.1 add the phrase “**and special waste**” after wherever the words “**hazardous materials and waste**” occur,

In Sections 3.5, and 3.5.1 add the phrase “**and special waste**” after wherever the words “**hazardous material and waste**” occur,

In Section 3.1.1 add the phrase “**and special waste**” after wherever the words “**hazardous materials and wastes**” occur,

In Section 3.1.1(1) add the phrase “**or special waste**” after wherever the words “**hazardous waste or materials**” occur,

In Section 3.5.1(f) add the phrase “**or special**” between where the first citation of “**hazardous**” and “**waste**” occur,

In Section 3.6 add the phrase “**or special wastes**” after wherever the words “**hazardous materials**” occur,

In Section 1.3.8 add the phrase “, **air quality,**” after wherever the words “**groundwater resources**” occur,

In Section 1.3 add the definition ‘**1.3.12 “Special Waste” means any solid waste that is determined not to be a hazardous waste pursuant to 310 CMR 30.000 and that exists in such quantity or in such chemical or physical state, or any combination thereof, so that particular management controls are required to prevent an adverse impact from the collection, transport, transfer, storage, processing, treatment or disposal of the solid waste. Without limitation, special waste includes waste that will require special management to ensure protection of public health, safety, or the environment based upon the physical, biological, or chemical properties of the waste. Special wastes include but are not limited to: asbestos waste, infectious wastes, except as specified in 310 CMR 19.061(6)(c)4, sludges including wastewater treatment sludges, and industrial process wastewater treatment sludges. For the purposes of this bylaw, special wastes do not include drinking water treatment sludges. (Ref: 310 CMR 19.006 and 19.061(2) and (3)).**’ The existing definitions from 1.3.12 – 1.3.15 shall be renumbered consecutively from 1.3.13 – 1.3.16.

Or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

The 2005 Special Town Meeting considered a warrant article that intended to strengthen the standards for fill allowed at the landfill. Prior to and at the Special Town Meeting it was determined that insufficient information existed to take an appropriate action. The Article was passed over and sent to the Board of Health for further review. The Board of Health formed a subcommittee, Environmental Fill Standards, which has studied the issue thoroughly and submitted a comprehensive report. The report examined the potential impacts of different materials being used for fill throughout the Town and made several recommendations. This Article is in response to a recommendation that Special Wastes be included within the Hazardous Materials Control Bylaw thereby giving the Board of Health the authorization to control and limit the use of Special Wastes as fill.

Direct inquiries to: Doug Halley, Health Director
health@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9634

Selectman assigned: Peter K. Ashton: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

ARTICLE 37 * AMEND ZONING BYLAW – SPECIAL WASTE
(Two-thirds vote)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw, section 4.3 – Groundwater Protection District, as follows [*Notes in italic print are not part of the Article but are intended for explanation only.*]:

A. Insert a new definition subsection 4.3.3.12 as follows:

4.3.3.12 SPECIAL WASTE – SPECIAL WASTE means any solid waste that is determined not to be a hazardous waste pursuant to 310 CMR 30.000 and that exists in such quantity or in such chemical or physical state, or any combination thereof, so that particular management controls are required to prevent an adverse impact from the collection, transport, transfer, storage, processing, treatment or disposal of the solid waste. Without limitation, SPECIAL WASTE includes waste that will require special management to ensure protection of public health, safety, or the environment based upon the physical, biological, or chemical properties of the waste. SPECIAL WASTES include but are not limited to: asbestos waste, infectious wastes except as specified in 310 CMR 19.061(6)(c)4, sludges including wastewater treatment sludges and industrial process wastewater treatment sludges. For purposes of this Bylaw, SPECIAL WASTE does not include drinking water treatment sludges. (Ref: 310 CMR 19.006 and 19.061(2) and (3).)

And, renumber current subsections sections 4.3.3.12 through 4.3.3.15 to become subsections 4.3.3.13 through 4.3.3.16 respectively.

B. Delete subsection 4.3.6.1 and replace it with a new subsection 4.3.6.1 as follows:

4.3.6.1 FILL – FILL material shall not contain HAZARDOUS MATERIAL OR WASTE, SPECIAL WASTE, or SOLID WASTE. This Section shall also apply in ZONE 4.

[Note: Subsection 4.3.6.1 currently reads:

“FILL – FILL material shall not contain either HAZARDOUS MATERIAL OR WASTE, or SOLID WASTE. This Section shall also apply in ZONE 4.”]

, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article follows a recommendation of the Town’s Environmental Standards for Fill Advisory Committee in its Draft Report dated December 12, 2005. See companion articles in this warrant with proposed changes to the Acton Hazardous Material Control Bylaw.

Direct inquiries to: Roland Bartl, AICP, Town Planner
planning@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9636

Selectman assigned: Peter K. Ashton: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred	<u>Planning Board</u> Recommended
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ARTICLE 40 **AMEND ZONING BYLAW – PRODUCTIVE REUSE OF**
(Two-thirds vote) **UNDERUTILIZED INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY**

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw as follows:

A. Amend section 10.4 by inserting a new subsection 10.4.3.12 as follows:

10.4.3.12 Special Provisions Applicable to the SM District – On LOTS in the Small Manufacturing (SM) District the Board of Selectmen, when granting a new or amended Site Plan Special Permit, may increase the Maximum FLOOR AREA RATIO and the Maximum Height above the limits set forth for BUILDINGS and STRUCTURES in the Table of Standard Dimensional Regulations, subject to the following conditions and limitations:

10.4.3.12.1 To be eligible under this section 10.4.3.12, a LOT shall have on it IMPERVIOUS COVER as defined in section 4.3 – GROUNDWATER Protection District of this Bylaw, which by its size or coverage may or may not be conforming to the limitations of this Bylaw, but shall have been installed or constructed legally in accordance with the zoning bylaw standards in effect at the time of installation or construction.

10.4.3.12.2 To be eligible under this section 10.4.3.12 and to retain ongoing eligibility, the amount and percentage on the LOT of OPEN SPACE, and of UNDISTURBED OPEN SPACE as defined in section 4.3 – GROUNDWATER Protection District of this Bylaw, shall not be reduced below the amount and percentage existing on the LOT on or before January 1, 2006; and the amount and percentage on the LOT of IMPERVIOUS COVER as defined in section 4.3 – GROUNDWATER Protection District of this Bylaw shall not be increased above the amount and percentage existing on the LOT on or before January 1, 2006.

10.4.3.12.3 Eligibility under this section 10.4.3.12 shall be limited to the following USES on the LOT, provided they are otherwise allowed in the SM District, and subject to the applicable regulations of the Groundwater Protection District Zone that overlays the LOT: Municipal; Child Care Facility; Industrial USES; and Business USES except Office, Health Care Facility, Hospital, Medical Center, and Commercial Recreation.

10.4.3.12.4 Any Maximum Height increases under this section shall not result in a height of BUILDINGS and STRUCTURES greater than 45 feet, plus 12 feet for appurtenant roof STRUCTURES that in aggregate may not occupy more than 20% of the roof plan area.

10.4.3.12.5 Any NET FLOOR AREA increases under this section shall not increase the Maximum FLOOR AREA RATIO above 0.50.

10.4.3.12.6 There shall remain adequate space for vehicular parking on the site that meets the applicable requirements of section 6 of this Bylaw for the USE or USES on the LOT.

B. Amend section 3, Table of Principal USES, by renumbering the footnotes (1) through (11) to become footnotes (2) through (12) respectively, and inserting in the header of the “SM” column, the following new footnote (1):

(1) See also section 10.4.3.12 - Special Provisions Applicable in the SM District, for special USE restrictions in oversized BUILDINGS.

C. Amend section 5, Table of Standard Dimensional Regulations, by inserting in line “SM”, columns “Maximum Floor Area Ratio” and “Maximum Height in feet”, the following new footnote (18):

(18) The maximum FLOOR AREA RATIO and height may be increased further subject to procedures and conditions set forth in section 10.4.3.12.

, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article would allow the more productive use or reuse of vacated or underutilized industrial properties in the Small Manufacturing (SM) District. The SM District is located in North Acton primarily along the west side of Main Street between Ledge Rock Way and the Carlisle and Westford town lines. The need for this zoning amendment became apparent to the Economic Development Committee when reviewing the former Somerville Lumber store at 976 Main Street, but it may apply to other industrial properties in the SM District.

The 976 Main Street site has been developed for a large retail lumber yard in the late 1980's with extensive paved outdoor lumber storage areas and approximately 330 vehicular parking spaces. Somerville Lumber closed its doors a few years later and the facility sat vacant for several years. The current owner, Methods Machine Tools, is a custom adapter of industrial machinery and uses only the interior of the building. The outdoor lumber storage area lies fallow most of the time. The few employees at the site use only about ten or so parking spaces. Methods Machine Tools is in need of expanding the building to install an indoor crane to improve operational efficiency for loading, unloading, or moving of machinery. It could expand the building onto the existing pavement with zero environmental or other impacts were it not for the fact that the building already exceeds current floor area limits for the SM District.

This zoning amendment would provide a remedy so that developed sites and facilities once built for more customers and employees, may be more effectively reutilized by less intensive uses, which need much less vehicular parking but often larger buildings. Building additions are typically associated with higher assessed property values and increased tax revenues.

Specifically, this article would allow, as part of a site plan special permit, the increase of building floor area and height above the otherwise applicable limits in the SM District - maximum floor area ratio 0.20; maximum height 36 feet – subject to very specific conditions and limitations, including:

- The site must have existing improvements on it. It cannot be a vacant “greenfield”.
- The increase must serve a use that is otherwise allowed on the property, but cannot be for potentially high traffic generators such as office, educational, religious uses, health care, or commercial recreation.
- The increase cannot result in any net increase of currently existing total impervious coverage.
- The increase cannot result in a net loss of open space.
- The height cannot exceed 45 feet plus an appropriate allowance for accessory roof structures.
- The Floor Area Ratio cannot exceed 0.50.
- Adequate vehicular parking must be maintained to serve the use.

Direct inquiries to: Roland Bartl, AICP, Town Planner
planning@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9636

Selectman assigned: Lauren Rosenzweig: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred	<u>Planning Board</u> Recommended
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ARTICLE 41 * AMEND ZONING BYLAW – HOUSEKEEPING

(Two-thirds vote)

To see if the Town will vote to amend the Zoning Bylaw as follows [*Notes in italic print are not part of the Article but are intended for explanation only.*]:

A. In section 3.8.3.6 relative to Amateur Radio Towers, amend subsection i) by replacing the first cross-reference “(section 3.8.3.6.a)” with a corrected cross-reference to read “(section 3.8.3.6 – first paragraph)”.

B. In section 4.2, Open Space Development:

1. Replace the first paragraph of subsection 4.2.3.1 with the following new paragraph:

“Minimum Tract Size – Open Space Developments shall be located upon a TRACT OF LAND which has an area within the Town of Acton of at least 6 acres in the R-2 District, or 8 acres in the R-4, R-8, R-8/4, R-10, and R-10/8 Districts.”

[Note: The first sentence of subsection 4.2.3.1 currently reads:

“Minimum Tract Size – Open Space Developments shall be located upon a TRACT OF LAND which has an area of at least 6 acres in the R-2 District, or 8 acres in the R-4, R-8, R-8/4, R-10 and R-10/8 Districts.”]

2. In subsection 4.2.3.4, delete the first sentence and replace it with the following new sentence:

“Dimensional Requirements for the Common Land - Not less than 30% in the R-2 District, 40% in the R-4 and R-8/4 Districts, and 50% in the R-8, R-10, and R-10/8 Districts of the total area of the TRACT OF LAND within Acton to be developed as an Open Space Development shall be dedicated as Common Land within Acton.”

[Note: The first sentence of subsection 4.2.3.4 currently reads:

“Dimensional Requirements for the Common Land - Not less than 30% in the R-2 District, 40% in the R-4 and R-8/4 Districts, and 50% in the R-8, R-10 and R-10/8 Districts of the total area of the TRACT OF LAND to be developed as an Open Space Development shall be dedicated as Common Land.”]

C. In section 9, Planned Conservation Residential Community:

1. Add at the end of the first sentence of subsection 9.6.2.1 the following phrase:

“within the Town of Acton”

[Note: The first sentence of subsection 9.6.2.1 currently reads:

“PCRC Site Area – The TRACT OF LAND for a PCRC must contain a minimum of 8 acres.”]

2. In subsection 9.6.3.1, delete the first sentence and replace it with the following new sentence:

“In a PCRC, at least sixty percent (60%) of the TRACT OF LAND within Acton shall be set aside as Common Land within Acton for the use of the PCRC residents or the general public.”

[Note: The first sentence of subsection 9.6.3.1 currently reads:

“In a PCRC, at least sixty percent (60%) of the land shall be set aside as Common Land for the use of the PCRC residents or the general public.”]

D. In section 9B, Senior Residence:

1. In subsection 9B.5.1, add after the words “8 acres” the following phrase:

“within the Town of Acton”

[Note: Subsection 9B.5.1 currently reads:

9B.5.1 MINIMUM TRACT OF LAND area: 8 acres. For the purpose of this section, the Planning Board may consider LOTS on directly opposite sides of a STREET as a single TRACT OF LAND.]

2. In subsection 9B.9.1, delete the first sentence and replace it with the following new sentence:

“In a SENIOR Residence development, except for the conversion to a Senior Residence development of a project approved under MGL Chapter 40B before January 1, 2006, at least fifty percent (50%) of the TRACT OF LAND in Acton shall be set aside as Common Land in Acton for the use of the SENIOR residents or the general public.”

[Note: The first sentence of subsection 9B.9.1 currently reads:

“In a SENIOR Residence development, at least fifty percent (50%) of the land shall be set aside as Common Land for the use of the SENIOR residents or the general public.”]

, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

Part A corrects a numbering error that was overlooked when Town Meeting adopted the section on Amateur Radio towers last year. Parts B, C, and D clarify the current intent of the Zoning Bylaw that minimum tract of land and common land requirements for Open Space Developments, Planned Conservation Residential Communities, and Senior Residences must be met within the boundaries of the Town of Acton. Recent experience with a preliminary project before the Planning Board suggested that this clarification would be prudent and helpful.

Direct inquiries to: Roland Bartl, AICP, Town Planner
planning@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9636
Selectman assigned: F. Doré Hunter: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred	<u>Planning Board</u> Recommended
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ARTICLE 42 * ACCEPT STREETS – JACKSON DRIVE & MONROE DRIVE
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will accept as public ways the following streets, or any portion thereof, as laid out by the Board of Selectmen according to plans on file with the Town Clerk, and authorize the Board of Selectmen to take the fee or easement in said streets by eminent domain or otherwise, including easements for drainage, utility, sidewalk or other purposes as shown on said plans or described in the Order of Layouts;

In the JACKSON DRIVE EXTENSION SUBDIVISION

JACKSON DRIVE - from the previous limit of acceptance at the easterly end of Jackson Drive a distance of 1,466 feet, more or less, in a generally easterly direction to the westerly sideline of Washington Drive, this being the entire road.

In the GLENBROOKE RUN SUBDIVISION

MONROE DRIVE - from the southerly sideline of Jackson Drive a distance of 500 feet, more or less, in a generally southerly direction to the end of a T-shaped turnaround, including the turnaround, this being the entire road.

, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

This article is to accept streets as town ways that have been built to Planning Board standards. In order to create a new street, a developer must first obtain approval of a definitive subdivision plan from the Planning Board. The land developer’s contractor then constructs the street according to this plan and the rules and regulations of the Planning Board. The Engineering Department inspects the street during construction to insure compliance with these standards. Upon completion of the street, the developer petitions the Board of Selectmen to start the legal process that will lead to acceptance of the street as a town way. Prior to town meeting, the Selectmen hold a public hearing and adopt an "Order of Layout" containing a legal description of the street. Following town meeting, the Selectmen obtain title to the street by deed or eminent domain. Such streets are built and donated to the Town at no cost; however, the Town will assume future maintenance costs as with any town way. The subdivision process is contained in Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 41, and the layout of town ways is in Chapter 82. Jackson Drive and Monroe Drive have followed this process, and are now ready for acceptance.

Direct inquiries to: Bruce M. Stamski, P.E., Town Engineer / Director of Public Works
bstamski@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9628

Selectman assigned: Andrew Magee: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u> Recommended	<u>Finance Committee</u> Deferred
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ARTICLE 43 * ACCEPT SIDEWALK EASEMENTS – MARTIN AND MAPLE STREETS
(Majority vote)

To see if the Town will vote to authorize the Board of Selectmen to acquire by purchase, gift, eminent domain or otherwise and to accept the deed of an easement interest for sidewalk and drainage-related purposes, on such terms and conditions as the Selectmen may determine, in the following land:

1. Land of Pamela A. Hoodes, located at 36 Martin Street, substantially as shown on an "Easement Plan of Land in Acton, Massachusetts (Middlesex County), owned by Pamela A. Hoodes, 36 Martin Street," dated March 1, 2006, on file with the Acton Engineering Department;
2. Land of John A. & Karen K. Sonner, located at 76 Maple Street, substantially as shown on an "Easement Plan of Land in Acton, Massachusetts (Middlesex County), owned by John A and Karen K Sonner, 76 Maple Street," dated March 1, 2006, on file with the Acton Engineering Department;
3. Land of Joseph G. & Rebecca Krysko Scanlan, located at 77 Maple Street, substantially as shown on an "Easement Plan of Land in Acton, Massachusetts (Middlesex County), owned by Joseph G. & Rebecca Krysko Scanlan, 77 Maple Street," dated March 1, 2006, on file with the Acton Engineering Department;

, or take any other action relative thereto.

SUMMARY

The donation of these easements encompasses the sidewalk that was recently built during the 2005 construction season on Martin Street. These easements are needed to due to the fact that Martin Street is not wide enough for a sidewalk given the location of the road pavement and the abutting properties. The sidewalk was constructed with the consent of these abutting property owners.

Direct inquiries to: Bruce M. Stamski, P.E., Town Engineer / Director of Public Works
bstamski@acton-ma.gov / (978) 264-9628

Selectman assigned: Andrew Magee: bos@acton-ma.gov

Recommendations:	<u>Board of Selectmen</u>	<u>Finance Committee</u>
	Recommended	Deferred

And you are directed to serve this Warrant by posting attested copies thereof fourteen days at least before the time of said meeting, in not less than six public places in Town, to be designated by the Board of Selectmen.

Hereof fail not, and make due return of this Warrant, with your doings thereon, to the Town Clerk, at or before the time of said meeting.

Given under our hands at Acton this sixth day of March, 2006.

Peter K. Ashton, Chairman
Walter M. Foster Vice-Chairman
F. Doré Hunter, Clerk
Lauren Rosenzweig
Andrew Magee

Board of Selectmen

A true copy, Attest:



Constable of Acton

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Glossary of Terms Commonly Used in Municipal Finance

Abatement: A complete or partial cancellation of a tax bill imposed by a governmental unit; applicable to tax levies and special assessments.

Appropriation: An authorization granted by a legislative body to make expenditures and to incur obligations for specific purposes. An appropriation is usually limited in amount and the time when it can be expended. Any amount that is appropriated may be encumbered.

A warrant article appropriation is carried forward from year to year until spent for the designated purpose or transferred by town meeting vote to another account.

Assessed Valuation: The value placed upon a particular property by the local Board of Assessors for the purpose of apportioning the town's tax levy among individual property owners equitably and in accordance with the legal requirement that property be assessed at "full and fair cash value", certified periodically by the Commonwealth's Commissioner of Revenue (no less frequently than once every three years.)

Audit: Work done by accountants in examining financial reports, reviewing compliance with applicable laws and regulations, reviewing effectiveness in achieving program results. A basic audit examines only the financial reports and legal compliance. An outside Certified Public Accountant (CPA) audit is directed primarily toward the expression of an opinion as to the fairness of the financial statements and submission of a management letter. An auditor must be independent of the executive branch of government. A state auditor, private CPA or public accountant, or elected auditor meets this test.

Balance Sheet: A statement that discloses the assets, liabilities, reserves and equities of a fund or government unit at a specified date.

Budget: A plan of financial operation embodying an estimate of proposed expenditures for a given period and the proposed means of financing them. A budget may be preliminary (the financial plan presented to the town meeting) or final (the plan approved by that body).

Capital Budget: A plan of proposed capital outlays and the means of financing them for the current fiscal period. It is usually a part of the current budget.

Capital Exclusion: A vote to exclude from the levy limit the cost of a capital project. This exclusion only affects the levy limit for the year in which the project was undertaken.

Cemetery Land Fund: A fund established to which revenues are earmarked for the acquisition of land development costs on designated cemetery land purchases.

Cherry Sheet: An annual statement received from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue detailing estimated receipts for the next fiscal year for the various state aid accounts and estimated state and county government charges payable by the Town in setting the tax rate. The actual receipts and charges may vary from the estimates.

Classification: The division of the real estate tax and personal property voted by the Selectmen. The Selectmen may choose one rate for residences, another rate for business, and another rate for open space.

Debt Exclusion: A vote to exclude from the levy limit the costs of debt service for capital projects. This exclusion remains in effect for the life of the debt only.

Debt Service: Payment of interest and principal related to debt.

Encumbrance: Obligations such as purchase orders, contracts, salary commitments which are chargeable to an appropriation and for which a part of the appropriation is reserved.

Enterprise Fund: A fiscal entity with a self-balancing set of accounts that is utilized to account for a governmental service when it is the intent to recover the total costs of service, including depreciation, primarily through user charges and may be supplemented by taxes.

Equalized Valuation: The value of all property as determined by the Commissioner of Revenue biennially, to place all property in the state upon an equal footing, regardless of date of assessment.

Excess And Deficiency: Also called the "surplus revenue" account, this is the amount by which cash, accounts receivable, and other assets exceed a regional school district's liabilities and reserves as certified by the Director of Accounts. The calculation is based on a year-end balance sheet which is submitted to the Department of Revenue by the district's auditor, accountant, or comptroller as of June 30. The regional school committee must apply certified amounts exceeding five percent of the district's prior year operating and capital costs to reduce the assessment on member cities and towns.

Expenditure: The spending of money by the town and schools for the programs or projects within the approved budget.

FTE: A full-time equivalent employee based on a 40-hour work week. May be one or more employees, but the total weekly hours equal 40.

Fiscal Year ("FY"): A 12-month period, beginning July 1 and ending June 30, to which the annual budget applies and at the end of which a governmental unit determines its financial position and the results of its operations. The numbers of the fiscal year is that of the calendar year in which it ends; for example, FY04 or FY 2004 is the fiscal year which ends June 30, 2004.

Free Cash: Certified each July 1 by the State, this is the portion of Undesignated Fund Balance available for appropriation. It is not cash but rather is approximately the total of cash and receivables less current liabilities and earmarked reserves, reduced also by reserves for uncollected taxes.

Fund: An accounting entity with a self-balancing set of accounts that is segregated for the purpose of carrying on identified activities or attaining certain objectives in accordance with specific regulations, restrictions or limitations.

General Fund: The fund into which the general (non-earmarked) revenues of the town are deposited and from which money is appropriated to pay expenses.

General Obligation Bonds: Bonds issued by the Town that are backed by the full faith and credit of its taxing authority.

Joint Labor Management Negotiation Process: A negotiation process available to Police and Fire Unions, which utilizes Commonwealth of Massachusetts' mediators and arbitrators. If an arbitration decision is issued, it is binding upon the Executive Branch (The Board of Selectmen and Management Staff). Further, the Executive Branch must fully support such an arbitration decision before Town Meeting, even if they believe such a decision is not in the best interest of the Town.

Overlay: The amount raised from the property tax levy in excess of appropriations and other charges. It is used to cover abatements and exemptions granted locally or on appeal, and cannot exceed an amount deemed reasonable by the Commissioner of Revenue.

Override: A vote to increase the amount of property tax revenue that may be raised over the levy limit.

Personnel Services: The cost of salaries, wages and related employment benefits.

Purchased Services: The cost of services that are provided by a vendor.

Property Tax Bill: The amount produced by multiplying the assessed valuation of property by the tax rate. The tax rate is expressed per thousand dollars of assessed valuation, for example:

House Value:	\$ 300,000	
Tax rate:	\$ 10	which means \$10 per thousand
Levy:	\$ 10	multiplied by \$300,000 and divided by \$1,000
Result:	\$ 3,000	

Raise: A phrase used to identify a funding source for an expenditure which refers to money generated by the tax levy or other local receipt.

Reserve Fund: A fund appropriated each year that may be used only by vote of the Finance Committee for “extraordinary or unforeseen expenditures.”

Revolving Fund: Those funds that may be used for special uses. For example, Recreation fees may be paid into a revolving fund, and expenditures can be made without appropriation with the approval of the Town Manager. Revolving funds are established by state law or town bylaw. Some revolving funds must be annually reauthorized by Town Meeting.

Tax Levy: Total amount of dollars assessed in property taxes imposed by the Town each fiscal year.

Unreserved Fund Balance or Surplus Revenue Account: The amount by which cash, accounts receivable and other assets exceed liabilities and restricted reserves. It is akin to the stockholders equity account on a corporate balance sheet. It is not, however, available for appropriation in full because a portion of the assets listed as “accounts receivable” may be taxes receivable and uncollected. (See Free Cash)

Warrant: A list of matters to be acted on by Town Meeting.

Town Meeting Parliamentary Procedure

Town Meeting is an old and honored tradition in New England. After more than 200 years we can say it still works – it does its job – and hopefully it’s more than a little enjoyable for you, the voters. It’s also the only form of government where the leaders must face the citizenry directly to answer all reasonable queries – and perhaps even some not so reasonable! However, to work well it must have rules of order – and it does. Town Meetings operate under what is generally called “parliamentary procedure” – in our case, as spelled out in Town Meeting Time. Unfortunately, this wonderful little book is widely read only by Moderators, Town Clerks, Town Counsels and a few others with unusual tastes. In addition to such formal procedures Town Meetings also are subject to relatively arbitrary rules of order set forth by the Moderator and precedent. The following information puts forth the most widely used of these “rules of the road” as an effort to help you enjoy and participate in our Town Meetings.

Moderator’s Rules

These are quite arbitrary, but hopefully are consistently applied:

1. Any registered voter may speak to any article, but all must speak politely and respectfully to other voters and members of town boards. Civility is not an option.
2. Since many voters may wish to speak, brevity of comment is appreciated. In addition, speakers are encouraged to add new points to the debate as opposed to repeating what others have already stated.
3. Voters may speak to an issue more than once, but generally “first time” speakers will be recognized before “repeaters”.
4. Remember to listen closely to the motion as stated. The motion puts the warrant article “in play” and it is the motion that is voted on, not the article as written in the warrant. However, there should be a strong similarity between motion and article.
5. Most motions must be “seconded”. Seconding motions is an easy way for newcomers to participate in the meeting. One does not even need to stand or be directly recognized. Generally calling out “second” at the right time will suffice.
6. Voting is most often done by voice. As the Moderator’s hearing fails, “standing” counts may be taken. The last resort, due to time constraints, is to take a counted vote by teller.
7. Although not encouraged, the Moderator’s judgment can be questioned as to the accuracy of the vote as announced. If seven (7) people request a “recount” of a voice or standing votes, it shall be done.
8. The Moderator will generally accept the motion to “move the previous question”, or more easily understood, “to cut off debate.” Many people think this motion is somewhat unfair, but it has been my experience that, more often than not, it is passed unanimously or by overwhelming numbers. In the past, the moderator has been accused of knowing who plans to make such a motion – generally such accusations are accurate!
9. After a motion has been made and seconded, the mover of the motion speaks first, followed by the appropriate Town Boards (generally the Selectmen and the Finance Committee) who state their opinions. The motion is then available for general discussion – pro, con, or questions.

10. Other than when seconding a motion or requesting a point of order, speakers must be recognized by the Moderator before they launch into their point or question. For the most part this “rule of the road” is rigorously enforced.

More Formal Parliamentary Procedure

There are many types of motions that may come before a meeting. The table below is far from all-inclusive, but indicates the most commonly used motions.

Motion	Second Required	Debatable	Amendable	Vote Required	May Reconsider	May Interrupt
Dissolve	Yes	No	No	Majority	No	No
Fix the Time to Adjourn	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
Lay on the Table	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds	Yes	No
Previous Question	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds	No	No
Limit Debate	Yes	No	No	Two-thirds	Yes	No
Postpone to a Time Certain	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes	No
Amend	Yes	Yes	Yes ¹	Majority	Yes	No
Postpone Indefinitely	Yes	Yes	No	Majority	Yes	No
Point of Order	No	No	No	None	No	Yes
Main Motion	Yes	Yes	Yes	Varies	Yes	No
Reconsider²	Yes	Yes	No	Two-thirds	No	No

1 In Acton, we generally do not accept amendments to amendments – too confusing.

2 Controlled by Town bylaw – 2/3 Vote same night; 3/4 Vote, plus posting ensuing nights.

Some of the motions listed above may not be totally understandable in table form only. The following elaboration may help.

The motion to *dissolve* ends the Town meeting and is appropriate only when all business is completed.

Fix the time to adjourn is a motion often made by the Selectmen and indicates when a given Town Meeting session will end and when the next session will begin.

Lay on the table is a motion used to end debate temporarily or permanently on a given motion. A motion laid on the table may remain there forever, or may be retrieved by the appropriate “take from the table” vote.

The previous question cuts off debate immediately and causes a vote on the article or amendment under discussion.

Limit debate is a motion generally used to put a specific time limit on a motion or time limits on individual speakers.

Postpone to a time certain is a motion generally used to rearrange the order of the articles (or a single article) in the warrant.

Amend – Many types of motions can be amended or altered to bring them to an even higher state of perfection. Of course, since amendments are a little like “beauty being in the eye of the beholder,” they sometimes fail to pass. In any event, after the amendment is disposed of by a vote, the primary motion, either so amended or not, comes back to the assemblage for further discussion and vote.

Postpone Indefinitely serves the same basic purpose as laying a motion on the table except that it is debatable and requires only a majority vote. If the postpone motion carries, the motion to which it applies is dead – in parliamentary terms, at least.

Point of Order – Anyone at any time may rise to a point of order and interrupt the speaker, simply stating, “Point of order, Mr. Moderator.” The Moderator will immediately stop discussion, listen to the point of order and rule on its validity. Points of order may relate to many issues, for example, the right of a speaker to the floor, proper procedures, indecorous conduct or rarely, but within the realm of possibility, some error that the moderator is committing.

Main Motions are made when no other business is pending and are the devices used to bring the warrant articles to the Town Meeting floor for discussion.

Reconsideration may be used to bring an article (or motion) which has already been disposed of back for a second time. If reconsideration is passed, it nullifies the previous vote and the article is re-discussed and re-voted. Many people feel that reconsideration is unfair, but it is a valid procedure and is occasionally used. In Acton, a Town Bylaw controls the vote quantum rather than Town Meeting Time. Anyone who wishes to reconsider a motion, particularly on a different night from the original vote, would be well advised to consult the Town Clerk on proper procedures.

Parliamentary procedure is not really complex, but the rules, like the rules of golf, do not always make sense. However, they should be consistently applied. If they are, then the Town Meeting can conduct its business in both an orderly and a fair fashion.

I hope this small treatise is helpful to you and adds to your understanding and enjoyment of a most precious night – TOWN MEETING.

Don MacKenzie
Town Moderator



Internet References

Town of Acton
472 Main Street
Acton, MA 01720
E-mail IT@acton-ma.gov

Information Technology

Official Town of Acton Web Site	www.acton-ma.gov
Document Management System (“Docushare”)	doc.acton-ma.gov

The Town maintains electronic mail (“E-mail”) distribution groups for all Boards, Committees and Commissions, as well as Departments. These groups are commonly referred to as “shells.”

E-mails sent to shells are automatically forwarded to all members of the committee who have provided their e-mail address to the Town.

Using e-mail does *not* satisfy Open Meeting Law requirements (Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 39, Section 23B). Please direct questions regarding this law to the Town Clerk.

To use a shell, send your e-mail to the address listed in the right-hand column of this table. When replying to an e-mail sent to a shell, it is recommended that you use the "Reply to All" function of your e-mail program so that all members are copied on your reply.

Acton Community Housing Corporation	achc@acton-ma.gov
Acton Leadership Group	alg@acton-ma.gov
Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council	abcc@acton-ma.gov
Appeals, Board of	boa@acton-ma.gov
Assessor Department	assessor@acton-ma.gov
Assessors, Board of	bas@acton-ma.gov
Building Department	building@acton-ma.gov
Cable Advisory Committee	cac@acton-ma.gov
Cemetery Department	cemetery@acton-ma.gov
Citizens' Library Department, West Acton	wacl@acton-ma.gov
Clerk Department, Town	clerk@acton-ma.gov
Collector Department	collector@acton-ma.gov
Commission on Disability	cod@acton-ma.gov
Community Preservation Committee	cpc@acton-ma.gov
Conservation Commission	conscom@acton-ma.gov
Council on Aging	coa@acton-ma.gov
Council on Aging Department (Senior Center)	seniorcenter@acton-ma.gov
Design Review Guidelines Committee	drgc@acton-ma.gov
East Acton Village Planning Committee	eav@acton-ma.gov
Economic Development Committee	edc@acton-ma.gov
Economic Development Industrial Corporation	edic@acton-ma.gov
Emergency Management Agency, Acton	ema@acton-ma.gov
Engineering Department	engineering@acton-ma.gov
Environmental Standards for Fill Committee	esfc@acton-ma.gov
Fair Housing Committee	fhc@acton-ma.gov
Finance Committee	fincom@acton-ma.gov
Finance Department	finance@acton-ma.gov
Fire Department	fire@acton-ma.gov

Hanscom Field Advisory Committee	hfac@acton-ma.gov
Health Department	health@acton-ma.gov
Health, Board of	boh@acton-ma.gov
Highway Department	highway@acton-ma.gov
Historic District Commission	hdc@acton-ma.gov
Historical Commission	hc@acton-ma.gov
Human Resources Department	hr@acton-ma.gov
Information Technology Department	it@acton-ma.gov
Joint Technology Advisory Committee	jtac@acton-ma.gov
Land Stewardship Committee	lsc@acton-ma.gov
Life After NESWC Committee	lan@acton-ma.gov
Manager Department, Town	manager@acton-ma.gov
Memorial Library Department	library@acton-ma.gov
Memorial Library Trustees	mlt@acton-ma.gov
Metropolitan Advisory Planning Council	mapc@acton-ma.gov
Morrison Farm Re-use Committee	mc@acton-ma.gov
Municipal Properties Department	mp@acton-ma.gov
Natural Resources Department	nr@acton-ma.gov
Nursing Department	nursing@acton-ma.gov
Open Space Committee	osc@acton-ma.gov
Outdoor Lighting Education Committee	olec@acton-ma.gov
Parking Clerk	parkingclerk@acton-ma.gov
Personnel Board	peb@acton-ma.gov
Planning Board	pb@acton-ma.gov
Planning Department	planning@acton-ma.gov
Police Department	police@acton-ma.gov
Public Ceremonies Committee	pcc@acton-ma.gov
Public Safety Facilities Building Committee	psfbc@acton-ma.gov
Recreation Commission	reccom@acton-ma.gov
Recreation Department	recreation@acton-ma.gov
School Committee, Acton-Boxborough Regional	abrsc@acton-ma.gov
School Committee, Acton Public	apsc@acton-ma.gov
Sculpture Park Advisory Committee	spac@acton-ma.gov
Selectmen, Board of	bos@acton-ma.gov
Senior Taxation Aid Committee	stac@acton-ma.gov
South Acton Commuter Rail Task Force	sacrtf@acton-ma.gov
South Acton Revitalization Committee	sarc@acton-ma.gov
Town Report Committee	trc@acton-ma.gov
Transportation Advisory Committee	tac@acton-ma.gov
Treasurer's Advisory Committee	trac@acton-ma.gov
Volunteer Coordinating Committee	vcc@acton-ma.gov
Wastewater Advisory Committee	wac@acton-ma.gov



Volunteer Application

Town of Acton
472 Main Street
Acton, MA 01720
E-mail vcc@acton-ma.gov
Telephone: (978) 264-9612
Fax: (978) 264-9630

Volunteer Coordinating Committee

Residents interested in serving on a Town Board, Committee or Commission are asked to complete this form and forward it to the Office of the Town Manager at Town Hall.

(Please print or type)

Date _____

Name Title (Mr., Mrs., Dr., etc.) / First / Last / Suffix (Sr., Jr., III, etc.)

Address Number / Street

Contact E-mail Address / Telephone Number(s) (Home, Business, Cell, etc.)

Please refer to the other side of this sheet and indicate below, in order of preference, the Board, Committee or Commission that is of interest to you: _____

Have you previously been a member of a Board, Committee or Commission (either in Acton or elsewhere)? If so, please list the Board name and your approximate dates of service: _____

Do you have any time restrictions? _____ Are you a United States Citizen? _____

How long have you lived in Acton? _____ In Massachusetts? _____

Present occupation and employer (Optional: Attach résumé) _____

Do you or your employer have any current or potential business relationship with the Town of Acton that could create a conflict of interest? _____

Education or special training: _____

Please list below any additional information or comments that may help in the matching of your interests with the most appropriate Board/Committee, such as civic experience, special interest/hobbies, etc.:

TOWN OF ACTON VOLUNTEER BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Acton Community Housing Corporation | Historic District Commission |
| Acton-Boxborough Cultural Council | Historical Commission |
| Aging, Council on | Joint Technology Advisory Committee |
| Appeals, Board of | Metropolitan Advisory Planning Council |
| Assessors, Board of | Minuteman Home Care |
| Cable Advisory Committee | Minuteman Vocational School Representative |
| Cemetery Commission | Personnel Board |
| Community Preservation Committee | Planning Board |
| Conservation Commission | Public Ceremonies Committee |
| Disability, Commission on | Recreation Commission |
| Fair Housing Committee | South Acton Revitalization Committee |
| Finance Committee | Town Report Committee |
| Hanscom Field Advisory Committee | Transportation Advisory Committee |
| Health, Board of | Volunteer Coordinating Committee |

Thank you. If you have questions or would like more information, please contact a member of the Volunteer Coordinating Committee. Current membership may be obtained through the Town Manager's office at Town Hall, (978) 264-9612.

The space below is for use by the Volunteer Coordinating Committee and the appointing body to record the status of your application.

VCC Interview	Appointing Body
Applicant Called _____	Selectmen / Manager / Moderator
Schedule Date & Time _____	Interview Date _____
Recommendation _____	Appointed Date _____
	Term _____
Board, Committee or Commission	
_____	Member / Alternate / Associate
_____	Member / Alternate / Associate
_____	Member / Alternate / Associate
_____	Member / Alternate / Associate
	Notification of Appointment
Recommendation Sent _____	Received by VCC _____
	Committee Notified _____
<input type="checkbox"/> No openings at this time	Applicant Notified _____

VCC 4/5/05

Proposed Town Meeting Booklet

As I mentioned a year ago at Town Meeting, I plan to put together a series of thoughts or vignettes on town meeting during the latter part of the Twentieth and the first few years of the Twenty-First Centuries. No such work presently exists – But I’ll need your help.

I’d very much appreciate your writing a few thoughts on town meeting – the “good” or the “less than good” about the process, a fond (particularly humorous) memory, a good or otherwise decision made, or anything in general you’d like to have included and be attributed to you in the booklet.

Please mail your submission to me at 12 Wilson Lane, Acton. I’d like to receive 100 or more different ideas for inclusion. Thank you.

Don MacKenzie
Town Moderator

Thoughts or Comments on Town Meeting

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