

**May 8, 2002**

## **TM gives wetlands protection go-head 37 articles get voters' OK; overlay rejected**

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When the gavel sounded for the last time on Wednesday night, Wayland residents had decided to stand by spending initiatives that totaled \$75,000, OK'd a \$24.1 million budget that included a \$1.3 million Proposition 2 1/2 override, and adopted a new Wetland Protection Bylaw.

In a speedy three nights, residents who attended Town Meeting kept the debate to a minimum and only voted the defeat of two of the 56 articles that were heard.

According to records kept by the town clerk, in the past eight years there has not been a single Wayland Town Meeting of only three days.

" It hasn't been in recent years that a Town Meeting has only lasted three days, although I don't think the turnout was particularly good, " said Town Clerk Judy St. Croix. " Overall, there was nothing very controversial on the warrant. Most were housekeeping articles.

" Unfortunately, we only have the big turnouts when there is controversy involved. This is a tough time of year for people who have kids involved in spring athletics, interested in the playoffs or tickets to Red Sox games, " St. Croix said.

Others, like Superintendent Gary Burton, said he felt comfortable with the numbers of attendants.

" I am very pleased with the number of voters that turned out and the showing at Town Meeting. It's nice to be in a community which cares so much about the school system, it's a very envious position to be in compared to some of my other colleagues, " said Burton.

The school's \$50,000 article to fund a feasibility study at the high school was passed by residents. The study will be conducted to determine the needs of the high school as it receives growing number of students in each class over the next five years. Architectural designs will be presented at next year's Town Meeting.

Despite the consensus on many articles, several did spark the debate that has become the hallmark of Wayland's Town Meeting.

A majority of the residents did vote in favor of the Planning Board's Cochituate Planning Overlay District - a zoning plan to limit growth and development in south Wayland - but proponents could not muster the two-thirds vote needed to pass the article.

" It's very important to remember that Cochituate is unique because it's right over the border of Natick and Framingham - two very densely populated communities, " said Cochituate resident Jane Stabile.

Small business owners, like Wayland Business Association president Joe Strazzulla, opposed the article, claiming that it unfairly targeted the business community.

" I am excited the article did not pass, and would like to thank the voters for their support, " said Strazzulla after the vote. " As always, we in the business community are always open to sit down

with any member of a board and discuss the concerns of growth in the Cochituate community for both the businesses and the residents. "

Also approved was the Wetlands Protection Bylaw, which provides a greater degree of protection to wetlands than currently covered under the Massachusetts General Laws. The vote did not go without some vocal opposition following its presentation to the audience.

" Although this looks good on the surface, it takes the powers already held by the Conservation Commission and expands them to what I feel is an unwise level, " said resident Michael Peno.

Conservation advocates were quick to speak in favor of passing the bylaw.

" The wetland have a direct impact on drinking water. They act like filter, screening out excess nutrients from the surface runoff which ends up recharging our groundwater supply and then comes out our facets, " said Conservation Commissioner Megan Lucier.

Residents also approved a \$40,000 plan to expand the Wayland Public Library.

The Finance Committee has recommended that neither the library expansion, nor the school committee's feasibility study be passed.

" Only a couple articles - totaling \$75,000 - were passed. That is not a major financial factor. The largest dollar-amount article, the \$88,000 (presented by the Conservation Commission) was passed over, so that was a good that something so costly was withdrawn, " said Finance Director Bob Hilliard.

All voter-approved articles will be paid for through the town's free cash reserves.

Two other costly articles - \$88,000 for storm water mapping and \$25,000 for environmental consulting - were withdrawn by the boards that presented the articles.

" We wish to pass over the (storm water) article because of the current fiscal condition that the town is facing, " said Conservation Commissioner Roger Backman.

The selectmen withdrew their request for an environmental consultant due to a mutual agreement between the town and Raytheon, which is involved in a lengthy cleanup effort on Boston Post Road. The defense contractor agreed to provide the \$25,000 needed by the town for a consultant.