

TOWN MEETING ARTICLE 1

FACTS

What will a YES Vote mean?

A “yes” vote on Article 1 will change the zoning for the 275-acre R-130 District parcel between Route 25 and Glen Charlie Road to allow other economic development options to be considered. **Any proposed developments would still require full review, public hearings, and local, state, and federal agency approvals** before anything could be built.

What will a NO Vote mean?

The properties, including an operating gravel pit and an abandoned “piggery,” are privately owned and are currently zoned for residential development. **A no vote means the properties will eventually be developed as high-density housing.**

- An analysis by FXM Associates found that the development of 90 single family homes would generate an annual loss of \$800,000 in net revenue.
- Another FXM report estimates Wareham will lose \$930,000 to \$1,500,000 over the next five years even before state aid cuts are considered.

What is going to be built there?

There is no proposal or specific project before the town.

Approval of this article does not grant approval for any project.

It simply broadens the potential types of development that can be proposed and subsequently brought before the town for consideration. Before any development could move forward, it would still require extensive review, public hearings and numerous approvals.

Who supports Article 1?

A yes vote on Article 1 is **supported by 4 members of the Board of Selectmen and is recommended by the Financial Committee (FinCom) and the Redevelopment Authority**, as well as many local business owners and residents who want to have broader options for future economic development, jobs and tax revenue.

Who is Notos Group?

Notos Group is the team behind Granite Links Golf Course and Marina Bay in Quincy. They have a **demonstrated track record** of working with cities and towns to build unique and innovative projects that create jobs and opportunities throughout Southeastern Massachusetts.

What protections are in place for the environment?

Any future development will be subject to a **rigorous local, state, and federal environmental review**. No regulatory requirements are waived with the proposed zoning amendment. In fact, Article 1 includes **more environmental protections than any other zoning district** including a **minimum of 25% open space preservation**. The Red Brook Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is not included, and no development is contemplated or possible on the state-owned Red Brook Area.

Any project considered after approval of Article 1 will require extensive public hearings, reviews and approvals from:

*Wareham Zoning Board
Wareham Planning Board
Wareham Conservation Commission
Wareham Board of Health
MA Dept of Environmental Protection
MA Executive Office of Energy &
Environmental Affairs
MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife
Natural Heritage & Endangered
Species Program
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Massachusetts Historical Commission
MA Department of Transportation
Highway Division
And Many Others.*

Tom O'Connell

April 10, 2021

Dear Town Meeting Attendees:

First of all, thank you for your time and participation in today's town meeting. Your commitment and attention to the issues before you today truly strengthen and build community.

Over the past several months, I've had the privilege of participating in the town's discussion about its economic future. It's been a constructive dialog -- one conducted with a degree of civility that we rarely see today. At today's special Town Meeting you will consider a zoning proposal that positions Wareham to compete successfully for economic development, jobs and tax revenue opportunities for years to come.

This is a critical time for Massachusetts cities and towns. The pandemic and resulting recession have wreaked havoc on municipal revenues, and their impact will be long-lasting. A recent analysis estimated that Wareham could lose as much as \$1.5 million over the next five years due to the pandemic, even before potential future cuts in state aid are considered. The next few years will see fierce competition for job- and revenue-generating economic development projects because they are preferable to cutting essential services or increasing the tax burden on residents and businesses.

Passage of Article 1 will be key to Wareham's ability to succeed in this competition. It would rezone a 275-acre assemblage of land between Glen Charlie Road and Route 25 to allow for commercial development. The site is currently zoned for large-scale residential development, which tends to generate net revenue losses in contrast to commercial development, which tends to create new revenue. Rezoning the land for commercial use will unlock the potential it offers.

Article 1 is merely a prerequisite to any future commercial development of these privately owned properties, which include an operating gravel pit, junkyard and the remains of a large-scale piggery. Any specific proposal would require, and set off, an exhaustive process of federal, state and local approvals, including a comprehensive environmental review. Right now, however, there are no commercial development proposals on the table because the zoning does not allow for any.

We believe in Wareham. Over the past several months, we've worked with town officials, community leaders and private citizens to ensure that the article is consistent with their views and addresses their concerns. We are grateful for their input and feedback.

Thank you for welcoming us into your community and allowing us to participate in the discussion. I know we can help Wareham meet its economic goals, and I hope we get the opportunity to show you what we can do. But however you feel about Notos and whatever you'd eventually like to see on the site, the rezoning is good for Wareham.

Sincerely,



Tom O'Connell

Founder and Managing Member, the Notos Group.

February 26, 2021

Dear Wareham Resident,

These are challenging times for everyone. It has never been more important for us to pull together as a community and look out for each other and the best interests of our town. The state is currently debating tax increases, program cuts and reductions in aid to cities and towns that are likely to impact every Wareham resident. In the coming months and years, we anticipate a highly competitive environment for jobs and new economic development as communities struggle to deal with a growing tax burden.

25% of Wareham's revenue is from state aid.

We had to budget for a 10% reduction in state aid this year and we have to anticipate additional cuts next year.

FXM Associates estimates that Wareham will lose \$930,000 to \$1,500,000 in revenue over the next five years due to COVID even before state aid is considered.

There will be new opportunities for smart development, but they will be highly competitive. Cities and towns in our region will be fighting even harder to bring tax-generating and job-creating projects to their communities. Wareham has a real chance to take advantage of some of these opportunities if we are united and prepared.

There will be a Special Town Meeting on Saturday, April 10, 2021 at Wareham High School to consider a zoning change proposed for the R-130 District between Route 25 and Glen Charlie Road. Passage of this zoning change does not mean approval of any project or concept. It simply means we will be ready to act and compete for opportunities as they arise.

Any proposed plan would still require extensive public hearings, and state and municipal review and approvals.

As you may know, R-130 is a zoning designation for residential use. Currently, there is a 275-acre parcel off of Glen Charlie Road in the R-130 zone to allow for large-scale residential development. These uses tend to add to the municipal tax burden, generating more in costs than tax revenue. In fact, an analysis by FXM Associates found that the development of 90 single family homes on this property, which would be allowed under its current zoning, would generate an annual loss of \$800,000 in net municipal revenue.

State officials are considering various economic development projects and initiatives. We do not currently know what will be available in our region, but we do know that Wareham has a unique opportunity to compete for any projects that become available if we are prepared and united.

With several pending town projects on the horizon -- including the development of Onset Pier, a proposed Public Safety Complex for our police department and emergency medical services, the

need for a new senior center and more -- we will need to find a way to address budget issues without increasing the burden on Wareham families.

This is Wareham's time.

Communities in our area will benefit from these competitive economic development opportunities and we believe it can and should be us. Please join us in support of this zoning change at Town Meeting on April 10th.

Sincerely,

Peter Teitelbaum, Chair, Board of Selectmen

Judy Whiteside, Clerk, Board of Selectmen

Alan Slavin, Selectman

Patrick Tropeano, Selectman

John Salerno, Owner, Glen Cove Hotel & Marc Anthony's La Pizzeria

John Cornish, Owner, Atlantic Boats & Stonebridge Marina

Mark St. Jean, Owner, Stone Path Malt

John Churchill, Owner, The Fan Club & JC Engineering, Inc.

Todd Mello, Owner, A Slice of Heaven

Jared Chadwick, President, Wareham Tigers

Damon Solomon, Director, Wareham Tigers Flag Football & Cheer Program

The Site

Article 1 will modernize the zoning of the 275-acre R-130 District parcel between Route 25 and Glen Charlie Road. Though few have actually visited the site and are aware of current conditions, it includes a currently operating gravel pit excavating operation, a former piggery where animals were cultivated and processed and abandon buildings from former industrial uses.











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Environmental Myth vs Facts

There are a number of rumors and misconceptions circulating about the impact of Article 1. Any future development will be subject to a rigorous local, state, and federal environmental review and **No regulatory requirements are waived** with the proposed zoning amendment. In fact, Article 1 includes **more environmental protections** than any other zoning district in Wareham including a **minimum of 25% open space preservation**.

MYTH

This zoning change provides “developers with a ‘blank check’ to develop 1000 acres of residential and primarily undeveloped natural resources without specific projects being identified nor how they impact the natural resources of our town.”

FACT

This zoning change **only allows other economic development projects to be considered. Any proposed project will require extensive environmental review** by several local, state, and/or federal agencies. The proposed zoning amendment does not change this requirement.

MYTH

The proposed zoning change “on land under which lies our sole source aquifer is a major threat to the future of Wareham’s drinking water supply and Plymouth County as a whole.”

FACT

The Plymouth-Carver sole source aquifer covers nearly 200 square miles and encompasses all or portions of eight communities including Wareham. The new overlay district occupies a very small percentage of the sole source aquifer (approximately 0.59%). **Any future development proposal would be required to demonstrate through the applicable regulatory review processes that the proposed development will not impair the drinking water supply.** The proposed zoning amendment does not change this requirement. (Source: *Region 1: EPA New England*)

MYTH

The zoning change “would likely result in the irreversible collapse of the sensitive ecosystems of the Red Brook Wildlife Management Area.”

FACT

The Red Brook Wildlife Management Area was removed from the zoning change article. **No development is or was contemplated on the state-owned Red Brook Wildlife Management Area.** (Source: *Wareham Courier and Wareham Week, March 17, 2021*)

MYTH

This zoning change threatens endangered species and sensitive environmental habitat.

FACT

Any development proposals within mapped state-listed species habitat **requires review and approval from the Massachusetts Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.** The proposed zoning amendment does not change this requirement. (Source: *MassWildlife NHESP Regulatory Review Program*)

MYTH

This zoning change threatens the rights of the Wampanoag people to hunt, fish and gather in the area.

FACT

Any future development proposals requiring state and federal permits must be reviewed by the Massachusetts Historical Commission for impacts to historic and archaeological properties, including consultation with the State Historic Preservation Officer and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. The proposed zoning amendment does not change this requirement. (Source: *Massachusetts Historical Commission*)

MYTH

Approving this rezoning opens the doors for large scale development with no further environmental review or study.

FACT

The proposed rezoning article actually increases protections including **mandating a minimum requirement of 25% open space** and will still require public hearings as well as review, recommendations and/or approvals from the Wareham Zoning Board, Wareham Planning Board, Wareham Conservation Commission, Wareham Board of Health, MA Department of Environmental Protection, MA Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs, MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, MA Department of Environmental Protection, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Massachusetts Historical Commission, MA Department of Transportation Highway Division and others.

MYTH

The rezoning takes away our options to consider low impact uses.

FACT

An “**Alternatives Analysis**” is a required part of the **environmental review processes** and ensures that any development proposal avoids, minimizes, and mitigates environmental impacts to the maximum extent feasible and complies with regulatory performance standards.

MYTH

The rezoning will allow for the development of public or protected lands.

FACT

Any future development on this parcel will not threaten habitat on adjacent protected open space. The development parcel is entirely privately owned. Moreover, at least 25% of the property would become permanently protected open space (none of which is currently protected open space).

MYTH

The properties included in this rezoning are undeveloped land.

FACT

The site includes an **active gravel pit excavation operation, abandon buildings from former uses including a “piggery”** where animals were cultivated and processed and other former uses.

MYTH

This proposal will allow for the removal of the buffer that protects the Red Brook WMA.

FACT

Future development will be **designed to provide the widest natural undisturbed wooded buffer** that is practicable between Red Brook WMA and the limits of work. For perspective, the main channel of Red Brook is located (at its closest point) over a quarter mile east of the potential development site’s property line. The existing permanently protected riparian (forested) corridor is on average two-thirds of a mile wide. The existing protected forested corridor will remain completely intact and will continue to contribute to the protection of Red Brook’s terrestrial and aquatic habitat relative to water quality, wildlife and fisheries.

MYTH

The rezoning will be detrimental to the pine barren habitat.

FACT

Future development will result in **limited impacts to pine barren habitat**, which is comprised predominantly of common scrub oak and pitch pine. Scrub oak and pitch pine habitat is not unique to southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod, nor is it a protected resource area in Wareham. According to MassGIS and UMass Natural Community Systems Data, there is a nearly 7 square miles pine barren habitat complex located in the Wareham area. The project site is located at the extreme southern edge of this mapped area and occupies only 5% (0.34 square miles) of the total mapped area.

MYTH

The rezoning is a danger to the watershed.

FACT

Future development proposals will be required to comply with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection Stormwater Standards, including **maximizing groundwater recharge through approved stormwater facilities**. The stormwater system will provide storage and treatment capacity sufficient to store, treat and infiltrate all runoff from parking areas and roadways onsite. Groundwater from the project site does not head in the direction of Red Brook. The watershed to Red Brook is approximately 10 square miles, a significant portion of which is permanently protected open space. The area of land that drains towards Red Brook on the project site is only 3% of the total contributing watershed.

MYTH

The Well Head Protection area is at risk if this rezoning passes.

FACT

Potential impacts to the Zone II Wellhead Protection Area will be limited and avoided through the following measures: **utilization of site design and operational best practices to preserve localized groundwater quality;** landscape management practices; limitations on site-wide nitrogen loading including demonstrating no adverse impact to nearby wetlands and waterbodies, public or private drinking water supply wells and potential water supply wells.

WAREHAM WINS
Yes on Article 1



Thomas P. Koch
Mayor

City Hall

Office of the Mayor

Quincy, Massachusetts

March 22, 2021

To The People Of Wareham:

As you may be aware, Tom O'Connell and his company have a long, successful history of executing bold, visionary, and successful projects in the City of Quincy. I write today to offer my personal reflections on Tom and the company, which I understand currently has a proposal before your town.

I would not be so presumptuous to speak to the specifics of the proposal being deliberated by your community, but I believe you should know that Tom is a man of the absolute utmost personal and professional integrity. In all my dealings with him and the company over the last several decades in many roles with the City, including as Mayor, I believe that the City and our community members have always been treated respectfully, with honesty, and with a great sense of fairness.

These are vital character traits for a private entity seeking to build public trust and support for a major undertaking. Projects built on a foundation of transparency and mutual respect are often successful. Tom's success in the projects for which I am aware is a testament to this fact.

Tom's character is coupled with another important ingredient to building successful public-private partnerships: turning vision into reality.

Over the course of an entire generation, Tom and the O'Connell companies have turned multiple concepts so bold they would appear to be audacious at first blush into projects that have had incredibly lasting benefits to our community. They took an abandoned airfield and made it into an entirely new neighborhood that thrives today as Quincy's Marina Bay. They took a barren and degraded section of North Quincy – a place where no one thought a project could be completed – and transformed it into hundreds of thousands of square feet of commercial office space known today as the State Street South complex.

March 22, 2021

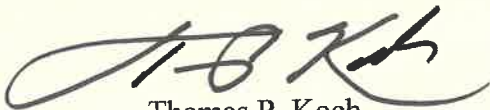
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And most recently, they looked at the City's of Quincy's former landfill, a contaminated eyesore, and saw what it could become. Few people at the time thought it possible, but Tom was integral in forging an unprecedented partnership with the City that led to the cleanup of the site, the innovative storage of fill from the Big Dig to make it happen, and ultimately the creation of the Granite Links Golf Club, which today is one of the most successful golf and function facilities in our entire region.

I remember very well during negotiations for that project that there were many people who thought that it would never happen, and the revenue stream promised the City as part of it would never materialize. It did happen, and it is exactly this kind of ability to turn the bold into the possible with an abiding sense of honesty and fairness is why I am comfortable speaking so highly of Tom O'Connell.

I wish you well as you deliberate the proposal before the Town.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'T. P. Koch', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Thomas P. Koch
Mayor