

**Town of Brookline
Advisory Committee Minutes**

Sean Lynn-Jones, Chair

Date: September 29, 2016

Present: Carla Benka, Carol Caro, John Doggett, Harry Friedman, David-Marc Goldstein, Neil Gordon, Sytske Humphrey, Angela Hyatt, Alisa G. Jonas, Janice S. Kahn, Steve Kanes, Bobbie Knable, David Lescohier, Fred Levitan, Robert Liao, Pamela Lodish, Sean Lynn-Jones, Shaari S. Mittel, Mariah Nobrega, Michael Sandman, Stanley L. Spiegel, Charles Swartz, Christine Westphal.

Absent: Clifford M. Brown, Lea Cohen, Amy Hummel, Dennis Doughty, Janet Gelbart, Kelly A. Hardebeck, Lee L. Selwyn

The meeting was called to order at 7:30PM.

Also Attending: Ken Goldstein and Henry Winkleman, co-petitioners for WA 34; Roger Blood, Thomas Nutt-Powell

- 1. Review WA 31 Amendment to Article 2.1 of the Town's By-Laws – Town Meeting --to extend requirements of the Massachusetts Open Meeting Law to Town Meeting-created committees. (Petition of Regina Frawley, TMM16)**

Discussion and vote on WA 31 was deferred to a future date.

- 2. Review WA 34 Resolution in Support of Affordable Senior Housing Development Using Air Rights over Town-Owned Parking Lot in Brookline Village. (Petition of Henry Winkelman and Ken Goldstein)**

Mike Sandman presented the report of the School Subcommittee which recommended Favorable Action by a vote of 3-1. Mr. Sandman noted that over the next decade, the number of people over the age of 65 will double, placing a substantial burden on the available supply of suitable senior housing. Affordability and availability are concerns. Article 34 proposes a resolution that seeks Town Meeting's support of leasing air rights of the municipal parking lot located between Kent and Station Streets. Municipal parking lots have been identified in the Housing Production Plan as appropriate locations for building affordable Senior Housing. The petitioners envision having the Brookline Improvement Corporation or a non-profit developer involved but the actual developer would be identified through an RFP process. The project would be overseen by the Housing Advisory Board which supports the resolution as evidenced by a 6-0 straw vote. Town Counsel is currently studying the concept to determine next steps.

Mr. Sandman reported that Town Meeting members from Precincts 4, 5, and 6 are in favor of senior housing and like the idea of reducing the school enrollment impacts of 40B projects by restricting this proposal to seniors. He also stated that the director of Planning and Community Development, while supporting senior housing and the potentially advantageous concept of leasing air rights over parking lots, has noted that the Town is in the midst of developing a strategic asset plan and that it's important to wait until that study has been completed.

Comments from proponents:

- We are in the midst of a crisis of housing for seniors; this resolution is the start of helping people age in their community.
- There are no details as to the size of the development; details will emerge during the RFP process.
- Town Meeting will have another chance to weigh in on this proposal because the leasing of air rights will require TM approval.

- Parking will be retained; there will be no loss of parking spaces for Brookline Village. There might be two levels of parking as well as a floor of retail use.
- Town Meeting members from relevant precincts have been notified and engaged in a discussion of the proposal in September.
- The Strategic Asset Plan has been discussed for a while, isn't underway yet and could easily take 2-3 years to be completed. We need to start the process now and that is what this article proposes to do.
- Unlike other 40Bs, the percentage of affordable units will be under the Town's control; we can ask for 100% affordable.
- This is a friendly 40B.
- Senior services would be incorporated into the design of the building and would be available to other seniors living in the area. Some of the amenities would be open to all members of the Brookline community.
- Public parking will need to be visible from the street.

Comments from Advisory Committee members:

- The concept of a building on stilts is not appealing.
- Town Meeting members from Precinct 4 first heard about this proposal in early August and were concerned with the identification of this particular site.
- Abutters have not been considered; focusing on just one site limits us in terms of thinking about the other sites that have been identified; and an apartment complex on this site will bring more cars into a transit-rich neighborhood.
- This project is being fast-forwarded, despite saying the article "is just a resolution."
- Why is there no mention of retail use in the proposal if Station Street is predominantly retail in nature?
- There is intense development pressure on this neighborhood.

- This site is too narrow for what is being proposed; concern for abutters' loss of natural light.
- How will the building's massing impact people living in the neighborhood?
- Why are specifics missing? Why not stipulate the number of affordable units?
- Planning for affordable senior housing is a good impulse. This article asks that Town Meeting ask Town officials to move faster and is looking for a way to expedite the construction of senior housing.
- The Strategic Asset Plan shouldn't be dismissed. This article asks Town Meeting to remove a site from consideration for other uses before those other potential uses can be identified.
- Who claims that there is TMM support from Precincts 4, 5, and 6 for this article?
- Residents currently rely on Station Street for overnight parking.
- The Town can be pushed in this direction without a resolution.
- This is a good site to develop and the resolution calls attention to the needs of seniors.
- Lack of schematics is a problem; buildings are getting packed into any space that's available.
- This resolution says, "Let's start the conversation" and that's all it does.
- Exploration of the site is a good thing, as is Town control over what is essentially a 40B project.
- This proposal is being presented in a vacuum; what are other possible uses and what would be the best use for this site?
- WA 34 is a call to action to build on this site.
- Don't refer to this proposal as a "friendly" 40B or any other kind of 40B.

Mr. Sandman moved Favorable Action; Ms. Nobrega moved to amend.

The following amendments were duly moved and seconded:

1. In the fifth Whereas clause, delete the words “Brookline Village” and replace them with “North Brookline”;
2. In the seventh Whereas clause, delete the phrase “including the Town-owned site situated between Station and Kent Streets in Brookline Village”, delete “a” between “as” and “suitable”, add the letter “s” to “location” after the word “suitable”; and
3. In the Resolve clause, add the letter “s” to “lot” in the fourth line; delete “Brookline Village situated between Kent and Station Streets across from the Brookline Village MBTA station (Parcel No.140-05-00); and add the phrase “North Brookline, in alignment with any Town Strategic Asset Plan, if available” after the word “in” in the fourth line.

The Chair called for a separate vote on each amendment.

The first amendment was approved by a vote of 17 in favor, one opposed, and two abstentions.

The second amendment was approved by a vote of 16 in favor, three opposed and one abstention.

The third amendment was approved by a vote of 14 in favor and six opposed.

A **MOTION** was duly made and seconded for favorable action on the following:

Whereas, the Town of Brookline has committed to taking meaningful actions toward becoming a more age-friendly community;

Whereas, the aging of the baby boom population cohort has created a need for a substantial expansion of Brookline’s supply of housing for seniors;

Whereas, Brookline's need for more affordable housing for seniors with low and moderate incomes is already acute;

Whereas, senior citizens benefit from living within walking distance of public transit, services, shopping, and cultural resources;

Whereas, North Brookline is a pedestrian friendly location that meets the living needs of seniors, including those who do not own an automobile;

Whereas the Town's municipally owned parking lots offer an opportunity for attractive air rights development of senior housing, including for low and moderate income households; and

Whereas the public process leading to the Town's Housing Production Plan identified Town-owned municipal parking lots as suitable locations for affordable senior housing development;

THEREFORE, be it resolved that Town Meeting urges the Board of Selectmen, the Planning Board, and the Housing Advisory Board to pursue a suitable air rights development of age-restricted affordable mixed-income housing over the existing Town-owned parking lots in North Brookline, in alignment with any Town Strategic Asset Plan, if available.

The **Motion** was approved by a vote of 14 in favor, five opposed, and one abstention.

Upon a **MOTION** made and seconded to adjourn, and voted unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 pm.

Documents Presented:

- Schools Subcommittee report on WA 31
- Schools Subcommittee report on WA 34
- One page flyer – “Station Street Senior Living”
- Correspondence from Frank Caro and Nancy Daly supporting WA 34
- Correspondence between AC Chair Sean Lynn-Jones and Station Street abutters opposing WA 34