

Town of Brookline Advisory Committee Minutes

Sean Lynn-Jones, Chair

Date: April 4, 2019

Present: Carla Benka, Carol Caro, John Doggett, Harry Friedman, Janet Gelbart, David-Marc Goldstein, Neil Gordon, Susan Granoff, Amy Hummel, Alisa G. Jonas, Janice S. Kahn, Steve Kanes, Carol Levin, David Lescohier, Pamela Lodish, Sean Lynn-Jones, Mariah Nobrega, Michael Sandman, Charles Swartz, John VanScoyoc, Christine Westphal

Absent: Ben Birnbaum, Cliff Brown, Dennis Doughty, Kelly Hardebeck, Bobbie Knable, Lee L. Selwyn, Kim Smith, Claire Stampfer, Stanley L. Spiegel

Also attending: Assistant Town Administrator Justin Casanova-Davis, Petitioners for WA 30 Irene Scharf and Lynda Roseman.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:10 pm.

MEETING AGENDA

1. Review and possibly vote on **Article 12:** Acceptance of an easement at 20 Boylston Street. (Commissioner of Public Works)

Carla Benka offered an overview of the subcommittee's deliberations on WA 12, details of which can be found in the subcommittee's preliminary report. Fundamentally in order to receive the zoning relief necessary to proceed with his project, the owner of 20 Boylston Street needs to comply with the special conditions imposed by the Zoning Board of Appeals. One of those conditions is the creation of wider sidewalks, which can be created by the increased setback of the building from the property line. Article 12 authorizes the Select Board to accept the easement to create wider sidewalks and spaces for planting street trees. A neighbor and member of the Design Advisory Team noted in an email that the easement "will provide wider sidewalks for better pedestrian access AND it will provide space for street trees. Both of these we [the neighborhood] consider to be public benefits, and will enhance the pedestrian experience along this stretch." Seeking the developer's agreement not just to plant but also to maintain, water, prune, and when necessary, replace the street trees would be in the Town's interest, but Town Counsel's office has advised that this condition not be included as an amendment to the warrant Article but rather in the Advisory Committee's recommendation for this article.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded for favorable action on Article 12. By a **VOTE** of 18 in favor, none opposed and 1 abstention, the Advisory Committee recommends favorable action.

2. Review and possibly vote on **Article 4:** Establish PEG Access Revolving Fund (Select Board)

Michael Sandman offered an overview of the Schools subcommittee's deliberations on WA 4, details of which can be found in the subcommittee's preliminary report.

Would these funds be shared with the School Department? These franchise fees go into the general fund. Not all funds need to be split according to the Town/School partnership, and these funds would fall into that category.

What about the Uber and Lyft funds. Aren't they shared? Uber and Lyft funds are dedicated to transportation improvements. Some of these improvements may benefit the schools. Last November some of the funds were directed to creating "Safe Walks to School."

Similarly there are streams of revenue that the School doesn't share either.

Q: What kind of organization is BIG and how is it funded? How do we influence the content of BIG? A: BIG is a stand-alone nonprofit organization, raises money on its own and gets this funding. To address the content piece, contact the General Manager.

Q: Do they pay rent to the Town? A: They invested their money that they get from the franchise fees to purchase equipment that is used by the schools and the town.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded for favorable action on Article 4. By a **VOTE** of 19 in favor, none opposed and 1 abstention, the Advisory Committee recommends favorable action on WA 4

3. Review and possibly vote on **Article 5**: Establish a Departmental Revolving Fund for school bus fees (Select Board)

Michael further offered an overview of the Schools subcommittee's deliberations on WA 5, details of which can be found in the subcommittee's preliminary report. Since the Municipal Modernization Act became law in 2016, municipalities have been required to enact a bylaw to create revolving funds. Article 5 establishes a revolving fund for the revenue realized from the fees charged to high school students who take school buses from South Brookline, a program that began in 2018. Although PSB operates the buses, the revenue accrues to the Town, so the revolving fund needs to comply with the regulations for non-school operating funds. The bylaw is closely modeled on the model published by the Mass. Division of Local Services for non-school department programs.

Q: How many buses in the program and how many kids? A: I believe there are 4 busses, don't know about kids.

Q: Can any of these funds be used to fund the transportation coordinator position in the School Department? A: Not likely as the fund will probably run a deficit.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded for favorable action on Article 5. By a **VOTE** of 20 in favor, none opposed and no abstentions, the Advisory Committee recommends favorable action on WA 5.

4. Review and possibly vote on **Article 6**: Report on the close-out of special appropriations / Bond Authorization Rescission. (Select Board)

Carla offered an overview of the Capital subcommittee's deliberations on WA 6, details of which can be found in the subcommittee's report. We have bond authorization for a new

HVAC system for old Driscoll School voted a year ago. But now replacing the whole school – since we don't know what is going to happen with the override, suggested we don't vote on any Bond Authorization Rescission until we vote Baldwin and Driscoll CIP items on May 8.

5. Review and possibly vote on **Article 11**: Brookline High School Project MBTA/Town of Brookline easement plan (Select Board)

John VanScoyoc offered an overview of the Capital subcommittee's deliberations on WA 11, details of which can be found in the subcommittee's report. He highlighted that while there are many components to the project, the article is simply to grant the Select Board the authority to exchange these easements. You cannot go back and change the exchange of these easements once granted.

Comments and Questions

Q: Cost of rebuilding the platform? A: \$6-8 Million.

Q: MBTA is designing the stop, is there a cap on how much they can spend? A: It is entirely the responsibility of the Town to do this station construction. MBTA will set the requirements and the Town will do the project.

Will there be pressure from people in the Town on the design and therefore raise the costs? The existing eight MBTA parking spaces will be reconfigured. The rest of the parking, including how many spaces for Brookline residents, has yet to be determined. The MBTA parking spaces will be used by T personnel and have been required by the T.

It would be good to have a clearer idea / definition of an easement from Town Counsel.

We have argued in the past that we overbuild our buildings. We are spending \$6-8 million to build the building over the tracks but it will never do anything to improve the education of any of the students. They could have built the building up or out instead of over.

They are building the building across the tracks to support education programs.

Voters voted on a high school project not a high school and transportation project.

The abutting neighborhood has been a willing partner, to make this school happened and have accepted a lot of impacts from this building – too high and too dense for the spot. South Path wasn't ever a part of the discussion and community didn't know it would be coming to Brington Road. Not part of the original design presented to the neighborhood but there was discussion about creating a safe and easy way for student access.

Some concerns raised about certain design elements but all are for the Town to decide. There has to be egress which is a requirement and access may just be a bonus. Concerns will be addressed throughout the ongoing design process but should not hold back the easement authorization.

This will bring more traffic to Brington Road.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded for favorable action on Article 11. By a **VOTE** of 16 in favor, 2 opposed and 1 abstention, the Advisory Committee recommends favorable action on WA 11.

6. Review and possibly vote on Article 30: Resolution pertaining to an outdoor swimming pool siting study. (Jonas, Roseman, Scharf, Toomey)

Amy Hummel offered an overview of the Capital subcommittee's deliberations on WA 30, details of which can be found in the subcommittee's report.

The petitioners offered further thoughts and shared more details about other cities and their outdoor facilities.

Questions and Comments

This is a perfect example of things we need to be doing and very excited about the prospect.

Caution about finding a site and the difficulty and issues that may arise or be perceived. Every study has a cost. Do you have any idea of the cost for this feasibility study? A: The Park and Recreation Commission is in the middle of hiring consultants for athletic fields so may piggy back on top of that.

A pool would be revenue producing and wonder if it wouldn't be self-funding like a bonding fund – debt service and operating could be covered with fees perhaps. Revenue would probably depend on the pool and its amenities.

Q: Did you discuss pool versus a pond/manmade lake? A: Open for any form of outdoor facility with water.

Q: How many weeks of the year do you anticipate this being open? A: Depends on the Town – two months to 16 weeks – opportunities to expand if that is what the Town wanted.

If people can't drive to a pool, doubtful people would use it. How much use there would be given more extremes in temperature or once the novelty wears off if not located near public transportation or a regular shuttle of some type. Might exacerbate differences in the Town if some people felt that they couldn't have easy access.

Beaver Country Day opens its pool to the public during summer for a fee. It is always very busy and illustrative of amount of use.

Missing point of the article – purpose is a study to determine if this is feasible or not.

Create a sandy beach at the reservoir would be an option. MWRA might not allow the reservoir to be used (may be an active water source so no swimming). Less MWRA but lack of parking and neighborhood concerns may be prohibitive.

This would not present Article 97 issues because it is recreation-related.

Capital subcommittee is responsible for making recommendations regarding the allocation of capital and how the town sets its priorities. This article is circumventing the processes we have in place. Set a standard for how you should be going about budgeting capital priorities that the rest of the Town is not following. Already other commissions and committees you could bring this to instead of Town Meeting and hold this item to the same standard and process.

What this is asking for is can the Parks Department look at it and see is there a place to put a pool. If there is a place to put it then figure out how it fits into the priorities.

This is a good place to bring this and is one of the richest parts of our process and is much better than in isolation at a commission or committee.

Having an outdoor pool would be a good opportunity for building community. Senior Center, Teen Center all isolated and separate.

When things go before Town Meeting everyone gets excited but there isn't much talk about how much anything will cost. So it is a dangerous process. All of these towns that have built pools probably haven't built 5 schools in short order. Mold things into a coherent shape – we need to put the horse before the cart instead of going backwards. Not doing things in a proper order.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded for favorable action on the **Article 30 – As Amended by the Capital Subcommittee**. By a **VOTE** of 14 in favor, 2 opposed and 2 abstentions, the Advisory Committee recommends favorable action on Article 30 as amended.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded to adjourn; there being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Documents Distributed at Meeting

- Schools Subcommittee Report on Article 4 and 5
- Capital Subcommittee Report on Article 6
- Capital Subcommittee Reports on Articles 11, 12 and 30
- Article 30 Supplementary Materials
- Article 30 Public Comments
- Article 30 Subcommittee Version as Amended by Petitioners
- Article 11 Public Comments
- Two graphics related to BHS Expansion

