

**Town of Brookline
Advisory Committee Minutes**

Sean Lynn-Jones, Chair

Date: April 30, 2019

Present: Carla Benka, Clifford Brown, Carol Caro, John Doggett, Harry Friedman, Janet Gelbart, David-Marc Goldstein, Susan Granoff, Kelly Hardebeck, Amy Hummel, Alisa G. Jonas, Janice S. Kahn, Steve Kanes, Bobbie Knable, Carol Levin, David Lescohier, Pamela Lodish, Sean Lynn-Jones, Mariah Nobrega, Michael Sandman, Lee Selwyn, Kim Smith, Claire Stampfer, Charles Swartz, John VanScoyoc, Christine Westphal

Absent: Ben Birnbaum, Stanley L. Spiegel, Neil Gordon, Dennis Doughty

Also attending: Deputy Town Administrator Melissa Goff, Assistant Town Administrator Justin Casanova-Davis, Town Meeting Member Jennifer Goldsmith, Parks and Open Space Director Erin Gallentine, Transportation Administrator Todd Kirrane, Chair of Transportation Board Chris Dempsey

The Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

MEETING AGENDA

1. Presentation by Town Meeting Member Jennifer Goldsmith of the results of the survey of Town Meeting Members conducted by the TMMA via Survey Monkey in March 2019.

Comments

After the presentation (see attached) there was discussion of engagement and outreach based on feedback heard in the survey.

We don't have resources to do outreach – no funding or information to do mailings, we don't have email addresses, no phone numbers, don't know how to reach out.

Some ideas offered included holding meetings in parks, conducting road shows in apartment buildings, etc.

There will be a post mortem of the survey results at TMMA annual meeting in June.

2. Review and possible reconsideration and vote on **Article 29** Resolution to encourage diversity among Town Meeting members (Nobrega)

The Personnel Subcommittee gave a brief overview of the adjustments to the original resolution that the petitioner has agreed to. Concerns were raised about the charge to the Moderator in the next- to- last Resolved clause. David-Marc offered alternative language.

A MOTION was made and seconded for favorable action on the Subcommittee version (in packet)

An AMENDMENT was made and seconded to change the next to last Resolved clause, (DAVID MARC's amendment)

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Town Meeting urges ~~the Moderator to consider~~ **that** inclusivity as **be** an important aspect of deciding membership

By a **VOTE** of 20 in favor, 3 opposed and 1 abstention the amendment passes.

By a **VOTE** of 20 in favor, 4 opposed and 1 abstention, the Advisory Committee recommends favorable action on the AMENDED motion.

To see if the Town will vote to adopt the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION TO ENCOURAGE BROOKLINE'S TOWN MEETING TO SUPPORT DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION AMONG ITS MEMBERSHIP

WHEREAS, the Town of Brookline, Massachusetts (the Town) has a proclaimed public policy to improve diversity, inclusion, and community relations; and

WHEREAS, in Town Bylaw 3.14, which defines both the Commission and the Office for Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations (CDICR/ODICR), says that (bold emphasis added) "the Town believes that inclusion will provide opportunities and incentives to all who touch Brookline to offer their energy, creativity, knowledge, and experiences to the community and to all civic engagements, **including town government**; and that inclusion is, therefore, a critically important government interest of the Town"; and further defines inclusion as "actively pursuing goals of including, integrating, engaging, and welcoming into the community all persons who come in contact with the Town **regardless of their race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, age, religion, creed, ancestry, national origin, military or veteran status, genetic information, marital status, receipt of public benefits (including housing subsidies), or family status (e.g. because one has or doesn't have children)**"; and

WHEREAS, in March 2017 the Town became a core member of the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), a national network of local governments working to achieve racial equity and advance opportunity for all; and GARE activities are commendable but are focused on town department practices, not town elected bodies; and

WHEREAS, a fall 2018 ODICR survey of diversity on Town Commissions, Committees, and Boards, including Town Meeting, found that these bodies are not demographically inclusive or representative of the town overall, and;

WHEREAS, ODICR is seeking ways to close this inclusion gap but cannot do so unilaterally; and,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Town Meeting Members should encourage and support residents who belong to one or more underrepresented groups to run for Town Meeting and/or to apply to serve on Town Commissions, Committees, and Boards, so as to build inclusion in town elected and appointed bodies with the goal of Town Meeting and Town Commissions, Committees, and Boards more closely reflecting the community: and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Town Meeting urges ~~the Moderator to consider~~ **that** inclusivity ~~as~~ **be** an important aspect of deciding membership of Advisory Committee, Moderator's Committees, and to the extent possible, the order of speakers at Town Meeting, among other considerations, and;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Town Meeting urges the ODICR to continue to carry out a confidential annual survey of diversity to ascertain the progress made.

Or act on anything relative thereto.

3. Review and possible vote on **Article 9**, FY20 Annual Appropriations Article, including Conditions of Appropriation, Departmental and Other Appropriations, Debt and Interest, and all Special Appropriations with the exception of Special Appropriation #32 (Driscoll School) and #33 (Baldwin School) (Advisory Committee).

Review of Article 9 will include, but not necessarily be limited to, discussion of the following:

- Special Appropriation #5 (Traffic Calming Studies and Improvements)
- Special Appropriation # 13 (Wastewater System Improvements)
- Special Appropriation #8 (Rehabilitation of Streets) 42?
- Special Appropriation #9 (Rehabilitation of Sidewalks) 23?

Carla Benka opened discussion with the expansion request for partial funding of Park Ranger program staffing in the FY 20 operating budget of the Parks and Open Space Division of the DPW. The role of the ranger would be to protect the parks and playgrounds from misuse (off leash dogs, soccer players tearing up turf after a rainy day, etc.). Track condition of parks after the implementation of this position to see if there is actually less damage to the turf and then this position will begin to pay for itself. The position would be responsible for administrative work and compliance with snow shoveling sidewalk regulations in the off season.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded to recommend \$37,584 increase. By a **VOTE** of 24 in favor, none opposed and no abstentions the Advisory Committee recommends the budget expansion request.

Special Appropriation #43: \$328,000 from Gateway East going to roadway repair but will also support construction management services to provide oversight to protect the Town's interests.

DISCUSSION AND COMMENT

Parking Meter Fund – wait for further appropriation. Want these funds to go toward roadway repairs. A piece of the parking meter fund in FY20 is going toward parking meters \$323,000.

Condition of Appropriation is not necessary for this item. To transfer money from Parking Meter Fund the AC would need to identify something on the Warrant that is also transportation-related.

Once Gateway East is done and if we don't want to preserve flexibility that the fund allows us, designate it all toward road rehab, including sidewalks.

We could hold back Parking Meter Fund back in the event of unexpected costs like debt service for Newbury.

Our index level on the streets is very poor according to a report delivered last year. It would cost close to \$4 million to bring streets back up to snuff. Underfunding is at the State level (Chapter 90 money). Both pots of money in theory should be growing.

Maintaining roadway money level set by last override committee.

Select Board should be addressing deficits in our roads and our building repairs, address deferred maintenance.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded to increase Street Rehab by \$278,225. Of that amount \$50,000 would be transferred from Item 54 (improvements to the Eliot Recreation Center's bathrooms) since that work will be financed \$50,000 from the unappropriated balance in the Recreation Department's Revolving Fund. The other \$228,225 for Street Rehab would come from Gateway East. By a **VOTE** of 24 in favor, none opposed and no abstentions, the Advisory Committee recommends the appropriation.

The Advisory Committee voted funding for the Water and Sewer Enterprise Fund for waste water system improvements. Carla noted that this item is a continuation of a program that began last year.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded to recommend for wastewater system improvements (#65)(Bonded). By a **VOTE** of 24 in favor, none opposed and no abstentions, the Advisory Committee recommends \$3,000,000 for wastewater system improvements (Bonded).

Carla gave an overview of the Capital Subcommittee's consideration of funding Traffic Calming for Woodland Road details of which can be found in the subcommittee report.

Chris Dempsey requested that the Advisory Committee vote the full amount for the Traffic Calming program, with the provision that the installation of the rectangular flashing beacon at the crosswalk (which is pedestrian-activated) would be postponed until after the other public safety measures were undertaken and evaluated. He noted that a pedestrian island is a relatively common feature on streets and gave as an example the one on Washington Street near its intersection with Gardner Road. He noted that the island achieves what we want to do in terms of pedestrian safety and helps to slow traffic. Abutters and neighbors have said that drivers take the turn on Heath Street where it intersects with Woodland too quickly, consequently a pedestrian island at the crosswalk is needed to slow traffic.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Q: Cost of the flashing beacon? A: \$25,000.

Q: Did you consider a pedestrian activated light rather than a flashing light? A: A full red light stop would be overbuilt for that section and would be unexpected by drivers given that there aren't many lights in that area. It doesn't meet the federal thresholds to be installed.

Q: Do you know how many people you estimate will use that crosswalk? A: Would get more use if school is built but it is necessary if school gets built or not. Responding to neighborhood concerns about blind spots and speed in the area.

Question was raised about the handout showing an overhead view of the area, including Woodland Road and Heath Street and existing sidewalks. Todd Kirrane explained that there are mature trees and no existing sidewalk – neighbors' front lawns on one side of the street extend to the trees so building sidewalk on opposite side of street. We consulted with Tom Brady to make sure we don't we don't compromise trees or lawns.

Beaver Country Day signal is moving in parallel with this and is moving up to 75% design and budget estimate done to have on the CIP for next year.

In 2013 Transportation Board received a traffic calming request from a TMM (Abby Coffin) that addressed a variety of needs. They are essentially looking at entire Woodland Road Corridor – Todd outlined the work that already has been done in response to this request and status of future efforts.

Concern raised that neighbors ask for things they don't fully understand, the request goes to experts who make decisions and tell neighbors what they need, and neighbors lose control and have no further voice in the matter. Not a good process. We should listen to the people in the neighborhoods who experience the situation daily and let them guide this.

Missing link is the fact that you had meetings made a plan and now changed the plan. Go back to the neighbors. We can't support a compromise when there is a missing part of the process.

What about pavement prompts – signs on the road to alert drivers that it might be a good idea to slow down? You could probably put pedestrian islands on a whole bunch of streets given the issues of speeding cars and poor sightlines. Chris Dempsey replied that the Transportation Department holds neighborhood comment very highly and the only thing above their comments is public safety. There are times we need to make the choice for safety above the position and opinions of the public.

Todd gave further explanation - pavement markings do not provide protection for pedestrians crossing the street.

Prefer crosswalk with island with flashing light. Compromise would be just crosswalk and island without flashing beacon then after we assess and if crosswalk and island is sufficient then no need for flashing light. If not sufficient, add light. No conduit need – flashing lights are solar.

I have heard that the Fire Department doesn't like raised bumps to slow down traffic. Transportation has an ongoing conversation with Fire Department and Fire Department is consistent that they don't support any raised elements. Deputy Chief attends all Transportation Board meetings.

Todd offered some statistics about the amount of traffic and speed in this particular area.

Route 9 is over capacity. Traffic calming alone will not solve cut through traffic. If you are looking for a comprehensive solution, you either add more capacity to Route 9 and/or add traffic calming to the cut through areas.

Chris Dempsey proposed a compromise: to install the crosswalk and pedestrian island as a first step, followed by the installation of the flashing beacon only if an evaluation of step one concluded that the crosswalk and island were insufficient means to slow down cars when a pedestrian attempted to cross Heath Street at its intersection with Woodland. He offered to bring this proposal to his board at a public meeting and said he thought that his Board would go along with this approach.

A **MOTION** was made to call the question but the motion failed.

A **MOTION** The Capital Subcommittee recommends \$132,000 for the Woodland Road Traffic Calming Project (exclusive of the crosswalk, curbing, pedestrian refuge island, and rectangular flashing beacons at the intersection of Woodland Road and Heath Street, east of Hammond Street), and further recommends that the remaining \$133,000 be transferred to Sidewalk Repair.

(Carla) A **MOTION** was made and seconded to recommend favorable action to appropriate \$265,000 , for the Woodland Road Traffic Calming Project with the condition that \$133,000 for the proposed improvements to the intersection of Woodland Road and Heath Street, east of Hammond Street, may not be committed, encumbered or expended until December 1 2019.

Mr. Dempsey was asked if he thought his Board would be amenable to that approach and he stated he didn't think so.

(Carol Caro) A **MOTION** was made and seconded to recommend the amendment offered by Chris Dempsey: favorable action to approve \$265,000 to install a crosswalk, pedestrian island and flashing beacon with the understanding that no funds will be spent on the installation of the flashing beacon until after the public safety effectiveness of the cross walk and pedestrian island have been assessed. In addition, there would be a public hearing on the assessment of the crosswalk and island before the flashing beacon installation, assuming its installation is deemed necessary. By a **VOTE** of 13 in favor, 12 opposed and 1 abstention the amendment passes.

By a **VOTE** of 13 in favor, 11 opposed and 1 abstention, the Advisory Committee recommends favorable action on the amended motion.

Further discussion of budget adjustments followed, including an increase of \$32,401 for the Planning Department to cover the costs of further planning services for the use of the academic building(s) at Newbury College. By a **VOTE** of 25 in favor, none opposed and no abstentions, the Advisory Committee recommends the budget expansion request.

Further, an increase in the Council on Aging's custodial staff budget of \$15,750 was proposed. This increase had been recommended by the Human Services Subcommittee when it presented the Council on Aging's FY 20 operating budget. By a **VOTE** of 25 in favor, none opposed and no abstentions, the Advisory Committee recommends the budget expansion request.

Debt and Interest

A **MOTION** was made and seconded to recommend funding \$18,968,479 in debt service costs and other interest payments in fiscal year 2020 budget. By a **VOTE** of 22 in favor, none opposed and 2 abstentions the Advisory Committee will recommend this to Town Meeting.

John Doggett gave an overview of the subcommittee's deliberations on the Conditions of Appropriation. At its public meeting the Subcommittee reviewed proposed conditions for five of the CIP (Special Appropriations) items, in addition to the conditions of appropriations that are customary (See A&F Report on WA 9)

1. Fire Stations Extraordinary Repairs. (Special Appropriations #36)
2. HVAC equipment for Town and School Facilities (Special Appropriations #56)
3. Pierce School Feasibility and Schematic Design Funding (Special Appropriations #69)
4. Baldwin School (Special Appropriations #68)
5. Street Rehabilitation Funds (Special Appropriations #42)

The Subcommittee recommends NO ACTION on #s 1, 2, and 3. The Subcommittee expressed no opinion on #4. The Subcommittee took no position on #5.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded to approve Conditions of Appropriations excluding the above items 1-5 .

By a **VOTE** of 22 in favor, 1 opposed and no abstention, the Advisory Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on the Conditions of Appropriations.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded for favorable action on WA 9 excluding Baldwin and Driscoll. By a **VOTE** of 19 in favor, none opposed and 4 abstentions, the Advisory Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on WA 9.

4. Review and possible vote on **Article 10** Newbury College real property acquisition. (Select Board)

What was learned about the bidding process during the tour with brokers of Newbury College last Friday. The Town's opening bid was \$19,500,000, less than half the assessed value of the property and Newbury saw this as the Town not serious about the acquisition. Another bid round tomorrow and best and final is due next Wednesday. Why slow rolling this process?

Property is not worth anything near its assessed value if you were going to develop it, since you have to tear down all of the buildings mostly just paying for the land.

Suggestion that there are foreign schools looking at the property. Town probably wouldn't be able to compete against an institution that would be buying the property to use the buildings.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded to table Article 10 until we have more information to formulate a motion. By a **VOTE** of 24 in favor, none opposed and no abstentions, the motion to table passes.

The next Advisory Committee meeting will be on Wednesday, May 8th at 7:30 p.m.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded to adjourn; there being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:20 p.m.

Documents Distributed at Meeting

- Personnel Subcommittee Report WA 29
- Combined Subcommittee Comments on WA 29
- Warrant Article 29 Petitioner v2
- Administration and Finance Subcommittee Report Debt and Interest
- Administration and Finance Subcommittee Report WA 9 Conditions of Appropriation
- Woodland Road Safety Improvement Concept Plan
- Capital Subcommittee Report on Woodland Road Traffic Calming
- Parks and Open Space Personnel Revised
- Supplemental Budget Memo from Mel Kleckner
- Budget Time Tables May 2019 and November 2018 (Excel)