

Town of Brookline

Massachusetts

HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

Virtual Public Meeting

May 3, 2023

5:30 – 7:30 pm

HAB members: Rita McNally, Pam Goodman, Steve Heikin, Michael Jacobs, Shawn O’Neal, Jonathan Klein, and Bernard Greene

Staff: Joe Viola and Emily DeHoog

At 5:31 Roger called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of minutes from March 15, 2023 HAB meeting

Mike moved to approve the meeting minutes from March 15. Pam seconded.

Voted to approve March 15 meeting minutes: Rita, Pam, Steve, Mike, Jonathan, Shawn, and Roger

2. Continued discussion of Warrant Article 13 (Wu TMM7, Card) and possible vote

- Roger said he talked to Brookline Mental Health and they were in favor of this Warrant Article.
- Roger said he’s recommending a referral to a committee, with HAB and Petitioner and other stakeholder members, to develop an RFP to define the services from the Warrant Article
- Roger shared the text on the motion on Warrant Article 13 on the screen. The edit was added “to the extent it is eligible,” in the last sentence of the motion. He said he made that edit because CPA funds have specific requirements for services.
- Bernard said that the Select Board voted to have Warrant Article referred to the Town Administrator, not an outside committee. They are asking for Chas to identify someone who can serve in this role. He said that the Health Department is working on refining their social services. He conveyed that the Select Board does not want the Town to be engaged in tenant and landlord disputes. Bernard said this was in response to a complaint that committees slow things down.

- Pam asked about the effect of the Select Board's decision on what we propose. Bernard said that the HAB can still decide to recommend whatever it wants.
- Steve said that no one wants to take the responsibility for this. He said it suggests that we should go along with what the Select Board is recommending.
- Roger said he communicated with Chas, who said the Health Department is going through a RFP process to figure out what changes need to be made to the department. Roger said his proposed motion would not conflict with this process. He said this referral is not to do a study but to do an RFP to seek qualified providers for the type of services contemplated in the Petitioners' Warrant Article.
- Jonathan recapped what has happened with this Warrant Article. He said he likes part of the motion being proposed. He said maybe this should be a resolution.
- Steve said he thinks this motion will take a while to go through committee. He said we can concur with the Select Board and suggest that funds from the CPA be used toward this.
- Pam said that Jonathan and Steve are suggesting similar things. She said the HAB should encourage the Town to move as quickly as possible and use CPA funds.
- Roger said when things are housing related, people look to the HAB for guidance. He said they don't want the HAB to punt this warrant article. He said CTOS is asking what the HAB thinks about policy questions. He said a policy question is between fulfilling these needs through funding an outside entity that has experience and capacity to provide these services, or getting existing Town staff to do the job. He said the HAB could recommend that using an outside entity would be a preferable policy.
- Steve said the HAB could say the objectives of this WA would be best served using an outside service provider and suggest the use of CPA funds.
- Bernard said that what Steve said is consistent with what the Select Board recommended. He talked about agencies that have lawyer housing clinics. He said the referral is asking which ones are appropriate and enter into an MOU with.
- Jonathan said that he likes Steve's formulation.
- Steve said the language should be "the HAB concurs with the Select Boards decision to refer this matter to the Town Administrator."
- Pam asked if we are suggesting that CPA funds would be used to fund this position. Roger said yes. Pam said she isn't sure if CPA can fund this. Roger said there are gray areas where this may be funded with CPA.

- Jonathan said that CPA funds can be used for rent subsidies but the gray area is if broader social services could be eligible for CPA.
- Roger said that the administration of this program could be eligible. Pam said that this needs to be confirmed.
- Bernard said that the Town has an ongoing initiative to create a more robust provision for social services and this would be part of this. He said that CPA funds could do things that the Town cannot do, like rent subsidies.

Pam moved, Steve seconded it.



Select Board for further action as follows:

That the Select Board appoint an ad hoc Housing Stability Committee whose express purpose shall be to develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) from the Town of Brookline to organizations that are qualified to provide, on a contract basis, needed and appropriate housing-related support services, such as those identified in Warrant Article 13, to low-income Brookline residents.

The Housing Stability Committee, not to exceed ___ members, shall include the two lead Petitioners of Warrant Article 13; one or more members of the Housing Advisory Board; one or more representatives of the Brookline Health Department as designated by the Director of Public Health and Human Services; and such other interested individuals as may be determined by the Town Administrator.

Annual funding for Housing Stability contract services, an eligible use of the Town's CPA Community Housing funds, to the extent it is eligible, shall be based upon the recommendations of the Town's Community Preservation Committee (CPC) and approved by Town Meeting.

HAB concurs with the Select Board's decision to refer this matter to the Town Administrator with the recommendation that the goals of this warrant article would be best served by an outside service provider(s). The HAB also supports the use of CPA funds, to the extent they are eligible, to address the needs identified in this warrant article.

- Jonathan said he wanted to add "HAB strongly supports the idea of providing the kind of services listed in the Warrant Article, and...". Roger said that he only feels strongly about some

of the bullets in the WA, but not all of them.

- Bernard said that it's suggesting that what's in the WA is best served by an outside provider. He said that the Select Board is saying that some of this could be done in house. Pam asked if they have social workers on staff right now. Bernard said not now. Steve asked if it would make sense if we put some of the goals from the Warrant Article.
- Bernard said it's not useful for HAB to say only outside service providers.
- Pam said that the HAB doesn't agree on everything and wanted to change the text to be clearer on two separate issues. Michael agreed with Pam.
- Bernard said that a consultant is in place to assess social service needs of the town and help structure provisions for those needs.
- HAB refined the language to:

HAB concurs with the Select Board's recommendation to refer this matter to the Town Administrator. A decision will be made by the Town as to which services, if any, will be provided by Town staff or by outside service providers. The HAB also supports the use of CPA funds, to the extent they are eligible, to address the needs identified in this warrant article.

Jonathan called the question for a vote.

VOTED YES: Michael, Bernard, Jonathan, Steve,

VOTED NO: Roger

3. Public Hearings on the Following Warrant Articles for May 2023 Annual Town Meeting: 6:00 p.m. - Public Hearing on Warrant Article 14 (Blood, for Housing Advisory Board) Public Hearing on Warrant Article 14, the HAB-initiated Inclusionary Zoning amendment to reduce from 19 to 10 units the upper limit of the range of unit sizes within which the developer can opt to make a lump sum cash payment to the Housing Trust in lieu of required 15% onsite affordable units

- Bernard said he has to leave but supports this Warrant Article.
- There were no comments from attendees for the public hearing.

Roger moved to vote for approval of Warrant Article 14. Michael seconded.

VOTED YES: Rita, Pam, Steve, Mike, Jonathan, Bernard, Shawn, and Roger

4. Report and discuss progress of CPA Committee; possible vote on HAB request for allocation of CPA funds to the Affordable Housing Trust.

- Jenny and Steve were unable to attend to discuss the CPA Committee
- David Lescohier talked said the CPA Committee is creating a CPA plan with the consultant Jennifer Goldson. He said that on June 6th there will be charrette. July 17th, there will be a draft plan and public hearing. The plan will be adopted and approved by September 11th. He walked the HAB through the planning process.
- Roger said that the accounting for Affordable Housing Trust funds coming from the CPA will be segregated from other Trust Fund sources.

5. Updates or new business, as needed

- Pam talked about the progress on the linkage committee. She said a consultant will be hired to do a Nexus study. A consultant has been selected and the committee is negotiating a price. The committee has asked the consultant to break it up into two parts.
- Steve said HAB had estimated \$50,000 but the proposal came in at \$61,000 but it could be more it there are more events and/or changes.
- Roger talked about the MBTA plan on Harvard Street and HAB creating an incentive on ground floor retail.

At 6:46, roger concluded the HAB meeting.