

**Town of Brookline
Advisory Committee Minutes
Tuesday, May 23, 2023 at 6:00 pm**

Brookline High School, 115 Greenough Street, Room 203

Present: Harry Bohrs, Clifford Brown, Patricia Correa, John Doggett, Dennis Doughty, Katherine Florio, Harry Friedman, David-Marc Goldstein, Neil Gordon, Kelly Hardebeck, Amy Hummel, Anita Johnson, Alisa Jonas, Janice Kahn, Pamela Lodish, Joslin Murphy, Donelle O’Neal, Linda Olson Pehlke, Markus L. Penzel, David Pollak, Stephen Reeders, Carlos Ridruejo, Lee Selwyn, Christine Westphal

Absent: Carol Levin, Ben Birnbaum, Alok Somani, Carolyn R. Thall, Katherine Florio, Susan Granoff

Also Attending: Deputy Town Administrator Melissa Goff, Assistant Town Administrator Charlie Young, Town Counsel Joe Callanan, Dave Gaioch TMM 14, Perry Grossman TMM 5, Regina Frawley TMM 16

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

Announcements – There were no announcements.

6:00 pm Public Comment – There were no public comments.

6:15 PM Possible reconsideration, further review, and votes on the Committee’s recommendations on WA 24 Resolution requesting the Select Board and the Town’s legislative delegation to initiate or continue efforts to modify Department of Housing and Community Development guidelines promulgated pursuant to the MBTA Communities Act (“Act”), requesting the Moderator to appoint a committee on compliance with the Act and requesting the Select Board to direct the Planning Department to staff the committee (Gordon, et. al)

Neil Gordon reviewed the intent of Article 24.

The Select Board, subsequent to the closing of the Annual Town Meeting warrant, established the MBTA-CA Multifamily Permitting Committee (the “Committee”). In lieu of the Moderator’s committee contemplated by Article 24 which seemed moot and redundant, the Select Board accelerated a rational, deliberative Act-compliance process. The Select Board’s Committee (which has, to date, met three time- they are meeting on average every 10 days) is charged with identifying, developing, and analyzing potential options for complying with the Act, so that Town Meeting can be presented with credible and meaningful alternatives in considering how best to comply with the Act’s requirements and guidelines.

The Article was rewritten so that Town Meeting supports the work of the Select Board Committee (MBTA-CA Multifamily Permitting Committee). The Committee, with the support of the Planning and Community Development Department, will make recommendations to the Select Board on proposed solutions by July 14, 2023, in advance of the closing of the warrant for Fall Town Meeting. Advisory members Gordon, Pollak and Pehlke are on this Committee.

The Committee will also focus on developing potential options that could, but need not include, portions of the Harvard Street strategy study area. These potential options will:

(i) seek to minimize any adverse impact to commercial districts and existing businesses; (ii) include at least one option likely to incentivize the creation of additional housing units that are suitable for all stages of life and income levels; and (iii) take into consideration the location of additional housing relative to available capacity and proximity to open space, schools, amenities and other public infrastructure.

Much has changed since the warrant for this Annual Town Meeting closed, and the Resolution offered as petitioners' motion has changed, accordingly. Petitioners now ask only for the following:

(i) That the Select Board and the Town's legislative delegation continue efforts to seek appropriate modifications to the DHCD guidelines; and (ii) That the Select Board or any designee or designees (i.e., the Committee), with staff support, initiate or continue efforts to examine practical alternative means of complying with the ACT, while remaining mindful of our interest in protecting our vibrant commercial areas, complying with the policies embodied in the Act, and promoting an economically and otherwise diverse community.

QUESTIONS COMMENTS

Amy Hummel: What if it doesn't pass Town Meeting? It is a resolution and non-binding.

This is simply a modified/new motion that has all of the previous Whereas clauses and not asking for a Moderator's Committee but continuing the Select Board Committee's work.

Linda Olson Pehlke elaborated on what the Select Board Committee would be doing. Incentivize up to 700 housing units. Looking at what was proposed in the Housing Production Plan. Asks the Committee to consider maximizing affordable housing and minimizing damage to or replacement of existing businesses.

The work of the Committee is running in parallel with work Maria Morelli's department is doing around Harvard Street.

Kara Brewton comes to the MBTA-CA Multifamily Permitting Committee meetings on behalf of the Planning Department.

David-Marc Goldstein: Regarding timing, when do you expect to wrap up your work? A: Goal of mid-July to have a draft of a warrant article. Meeting every 10 days. Having legal compliance done, we can do the zoning the way we want to.

Neil Gordon: With this amendment we are trying to bust the myth that the Harvard Street plan is the path to compliance and everything else is against the law. That is the myth.

Janice Kahn: Are you looking only at Harvard Street or other areas to comply? A: Looking elsewhere.

David Pollak: The Harvard Street corridor strategy is focused solely on pursuing MBTA-CA compliance with the single 48-acre zoning district; utilizing multiple areas in town to comply with the MBTA-CA, including existing three-family and other multi-family districts or portions of other corridors, would not require the Town to impose changes on the Harvard Street corridor; and acres of land and allow multifamily housing as of right without a special permit. Take acreage within access of a T Stop and remove special permit requirement. Coolidge Corner overlay district has to do that.

The charge of the Committee is to come up with a two options – one likely to be compliant, the other targeting 700 units of housing.

Carlos: Change will happen overtime – 2 years, 10 years or 40 years, the ball is in motion.

No incentive to change any parcels since they are all already built out. Motivation to tear something down is already there.

Neil Gordon: Need more housing and we need it now. So we have the Harvard St plan as presented and supported by housing advocates. Opponents say don't worry because owners have owned it for years no one is going to make any changes. They can't both be true.

Neil Gordon explained why this is the charge that the petitioners would have asked for – The reason we don't withdraw is the petitioners had to lobby really hard against resistance from the Town Administrator. Just withdrawing the article doesn't give the resolution the will of Town Meeting - We like what you are doing it and keep doing it. We will take our chances with the will of Town Meeting.

A **MOTION** was made and seconded for Favorable Action on the revised WA 24 as it appears in May 24, 2022, Annual Town Meeting, Article 24 – Supplement No. 1.

By a **VOTE** of 22 in favor, none opposed, and no abstentions, the Advisory Committee recommends Favorable Action on WA 24 as amended.

6:45 PM Other business

Donelle O'Neil addressed some postings where his name was implicated in a newsletter from the Black N Brown Club. Ultimately comes down to this group not receiving ARPA funds. Nothing more, nothing less. That is the disagreement that has been going on and affecting the 3% in Town. Went on record that he has nothing to do with the newsletter and is not a member of that group.

Would be disappointed if the Town doesn't celebrate Juneteenth. Is there not a way for both events to be funded by the Town? The group doesn't want to partner up because of the Police presence.

Upon a **MOTION** made and seconded to adjourn, and voted unanimously, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Documents Presented

<https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/Index/4214>

May 24, 2022, Annual Town Meeting, Article 24 – Supplement No. 1

VOTES

	Vote 1
# Votes Yes	22
# Votes No	0
# Votes Abstain	0
Vote Description:	MAIN MOTION: FAVORABLE ACTION on the REVISED MOTION under WA24 submitted by the petitioner(s)
	<i>Enter Y, N or A</i>
Ben Birnbaum	
Harry Bohrs	Y
Cliff Brown	Y
Patty Correa	Y
John Doggett	Y
Katherine Florio	
Harry Friedman	Y
David-Marc Goldstein	Y
Neil Gordon	Y
Susan Granoff	
Kelly Hardebeck	Y
Amy Hummel	Y
Anita Johnson	Y
Alisa Jonas	Y
Janice Kahn	Y
Pam Lodish	Y
Joslin Murphy	Y
Donelle O'Neal, Sr.	Y
Linda Olson Pehlke	Y
Markus Penzel	Y
David Pollak	Y
Stephen Reeders	Y
Carlos Ridruejo	Y
Lee Selwyn	Y
Alok Somani	
Carolyn Thall	
Christine Westphal	Y
Dennis Doughty	