

Town of Brookline
Advisory Committee Minutes

May 26, 2020

Present Remotely: Vice-Chair Carla Benka, Ben Birnbaum, Harry Bohrs, Clifford Brown, Carol Caro, John Doggett, Dennis Doughty, Harry Friedman, Janet Gelbart, David-Marc Goldstein, Neil Gordon, Susan Granoff, Amy Hummel, Alisa Jonas, Janice Kahn, Steve Kanes, David Lescohier, Carol Levin, Fred Levitan, Pam Lodish, Carlos Ridruejo, Chair Michael Sandman, Lee Selwyn, Kim Smith, Claire Stampfer, Charles Swartz, Paul Warren, Christine Westphal, Neil Wishinsky

Also present: Town Meeting members Hugh Mattison, Jules Milner-Brage, Mark Levy, Bob Lepson, Mark Gray, and John VanScoyoc; Elena Huisman and other members of the public.

Announcements: Pursuant to this Board's Authority under 940 CMR 29.10 (8), all Advisory Committee Members will be participating remotely via telephone or video conferencing due to emergency regulations regarding the Corona virus.

The Chair has reviewed the requirements of the regulations. There is a quorum physically present and all votes taken will be recorded by roll call so all above listed Advisory Committee members will be allowed to vote.

AGENDA

7:30 PM Public Hearing

1. Proposal that the Advisory Committee support a limited warranty for the Annual Town Meeting and offer no recommendation for all articles other than Articles 3-15; 18; 19; and 25

Public Comments

Hearing none the Chair moved on to the second item on the hearing agenda.

2. Warrant Article 8 (FY21 Operating Budget and Special Appropriations/CIP)

Chair: There is a potential \$13M shortfall that will need to be distributed between the Town and School. What are the things that will be postponed, not funded, discontinued, and so forth.

Public Comments

Advisory Committee already received via email comments that expressed concern about funding initiatives for pedestrian and bicycle paths – there is a potential loss of \$50,000 of State funding for the Olmsted Bridle Path. Comments may be found at the end of these minutes.

Claire Stampfer: As our state relaxes restrictions on activities during the corona virus pandemic, Brookline needs to establish safe outdoor spaces for mild weather activities and commuting. This is both a public health and an economic imperative. A critical component is the provision of adequate safe spaces for pedestrian, wheelchair, bicycle, tricycle, and scooter transportation and commercial activities.

Many Brookline residents, who previously would have taken public transport or hailed a taxi, etc. will not feel safe doing so now. Many of those persons do not own their own cars. Therefore, bicycling has become an increasingly common choice for commuting and shopping. Still, many cannot act on that choice for fear of being injured in the motor vehicle roadway. Indeed at this time the rate of traffic fatalities has increased. Therefore, now more than ever, we need to secure roadway space for pedestrians, non-motorized vehicles and

wheelchairs, bikes and scooters. Provision of such safe travel ways has been shown to improve business, including sales and employment. Sidewalk plans that include safe commercial spaces will also support our local businesses.

Social distancing will be our new normal until an effective and safe corona virus vaccine is developed and becomes universally available. We need to invest in municipal services that make it easier for people to conduct their lives and to earn their living while observing the new public health policies. Like Boston and Somerville, Brookline needs to allocate funds that support these changes in the ways we must use public spaces now and probably for the next 2 years. Already many businesses are changing the way that they do business to be more accommodating to remote workers. Our experiences with the corona virus pandemic have the potential to transform our commuting spaces for good. By funding infrastructure to make our streets safe for all users now will help us now to cope with this pandemic, and should continue to provide vital and necessary public spaces for the future.

Neil W: Been involved for 20 years with Town and Select Board; we are about to face the toughest budgeting situation in my experience. The lack of public awareness of what we are about to do is mindboggling. The Town Administrator will preset what is essentially Draconian budget that will cut a lot of stuff. Every dollar we cut has a constituency. The Town Administrator is going through an exercise he calls "smoothing" and he may get the number down but it will hit in other areas. The Schools put down their marker and they want to increase their budget to cover costs associated COVID and with reopening. We need to be prepared for a tsunami next week.

Chair: Town Administrator has asked Town School Partnership for direction - priorities.

David-Marc: We are going blind here. I would like to know what we will be left with after each option – if Capital delays some CIP numbers how far down does that take us from the \$13M, for example. It might help to have Plan A, Plan B, Plan C – if we do this, we are left with that, for example.

Carol C: How many proposals in the CIP can be put aside for a later date or not done at all? A: The Capital Subcommittee met once to reconsider its initial recommendations. Agreed they did not have enough information to make any new recommendations. John Doggett created a spreadsheet for us all to list "nice to have" vs critical items. Carla went to departments to get that data from them as well and Capital will meet again tomorrow to compare the information from department and division heads, and take it all into consideration and make our recommendations. The questions asked were

If we defer any projects are we incurring additional cost in the out years?

If we defer will it have an impact on public safety?

If we defer are we missing an opportunity for outside funding, like the Bridle Path conversion potential loss of state funds.

The input from Department and Division was thoughtful and helpful.

In response to David-Marc's question, the Chair shared FY 2021 Major Assumptions from Town School Partnership Meeting. ([Notes from May 22 Meeting](#))

Amy: We are getting more information and trying to do this thoughtfully, but I still doubt there will be consensus.

David L: Last night Precinct 11 had a meeting to meet candidates. In the morning before that meeting, I wrote a briefing based on the Town School Partnership meeting. There was no discussion or interest about the budget or the Town's financial situation at that meeting.

Susan: Costs associated with dealing with reducing the spread of COVID. Bathrooms are significant vectors for the spread. Have there been any requests for remodeling of bathrooms so they can be safer in schools and other town buildings? A: To date the focus has been on cleaning materials and staffing – the personnel and hours it takes to do the cleaning.

We need to be getting a list of costs associated with defending the Town against COVID separate from other expenses. If toilets don't have lids, for example, contagions are spread into the air. We shouldn't be having high speed hand dryers anymore and install sinks that don't have to be touched. Concerned that these issues are not being raised and unclear who is looking into them. A: The Health Department is responsible for looking at all of these things and adding to budget requests.

Carlos: The toilet is a Building Code mandate. Cannot have covers on public toilets.

Neil W: If we budget for this stuff we won't get reimbursed. It's a catch-22. That is why we should beef up reserves so we can fund it on an unbudgeted basis.

Jules Milner-Brage: To expound on what Neil said, the background is that at recent Town/School Partnership Committee meeting, Melissa Goff said: The Town Administrator's office's understanding of current State and Federal guidance regarding what will be eligible for Federal CARES/FEMA reimbursement is that only 'unexpected' Covid-response expenses are eligible. Thus, in effect, paradoxically, we may have to *not* budget for those expenses, for them to be reimbursed.

Neil W: The solution is to add to the reserve fund and fund it on an ad hoc basis as they occur. Not normal. Not ideal but may be necessary.

Cliff: Pensions determined by the Retirement Board, an independent entity from the Town. We are not in a position to look at these at this year FY21. We are not looking at a one year problem. Our revenues are likely to be effected over a couple of years. The Health Department needs to come up with a plan to open our buildings safely and we need to be cautious about reaching conclusions without having all the information we need.

Fred: We may be able to lower funding for FY22 with retirement board approval.

Carla: Another possible increase – increase in health care payments and therefore in the Town's share of contributions to increased health care costs.

Chair: Go back to the Town Administrator and say we would like to see a Health Department Plan for reopening the Town and School and what the costs will be related to that specifically.

Paul W: Agree we need to proceed with caution. The Town is guessing it is \$13M – originally estimated \$8-38M and the Town is saying upper range could be \$18M. It could be a lot higher. We need to be careful about expanding spending in areas and for services that we don't already have. I am concerned about messaging on TMMA, FaceBook and Twitter about an override. I think people are under pressure, have been laid off, work in hospitals and schools, and have taken pay cuts. There is not going to be a fast recovery. Be careful that we load up on taxes to solve this. We shouldn't rely on that. All that together, everybody is going to be coming out for their piece of the pie but when things are unknown you don't expand, you trim the budget.

Harry B: Have we gotten anything from the 6th floor about furloughs (models and numbers) and should we be aware of those numbers and if and how there is any savings? A: Most have been in recreation and library and hit this year.

Dennis: Deciding to embrace BFAC's recommendation to level up the stabilization fund doesn't seem a good option. Adding to the rainy day fund while it's raining seems very short sighted. Save the recommendations for when we come out of a pandemic.

Carlos: Follow up on what Neil, Paul and David have said. We don't know what is going to happen at the end so we have to try not to spend as much as we can, anywhere. If you look at CIP numbers around \$5M, a lot of those projects may have to wait a year but even if we didn't spend that \$5M we are still short. We have to look everywhere and think about the future.

Christine: Dealing in a vacuum. Until we start to tell the broader Town community how many people's jobs this is going to impact, it won't have any meaning to them. If we strip out everything we might get through this budget cycle but no guarantee that State or Town funds will recover. Pushing through overrides will become a lot trickier. A: We have suggested that perhaps the Town Administrator and School Committee have talks with the unions and offer choices - to lose jobs or lower compensation/benefits instead. We don't know what the response is. This would have to take place in discussions during negotiations.

Carol L. I love idea of the Advisory Committee having a reserve fund that they can reach in on their own. Difficult to talk about granular issues without having shared guiding principles— match short term expenditures with short term revenues, discuss reserves and funding reserves, etc. Agree that reserves are for extraordinary circumstances, so very appropriate to not add funds at this time as we are in extraordinary circumstances.

Neil G: Closing the budget gap, not spending, balancing the budget is easy. Cut things out and you don't do them but will not be to the benefit of the Town's mission. Complicated in a larger strategic way – important to look at tradeoffs, and budgeting in that context. We are dealing with estimates of revenues, we don't know but we have a range, possible to budget at the higher end of the range and react, readjust after the fact, when more is known.

Janet: We don't have time for strategy, strategy is taking a long term look and we don't have time for that. We can't count money we don't have. I look at the budget being presented in June – sustainable amounts – and then in November we may have more information and at that point we need to leave enough flexibility to fix when we have more information. The budget will say department by department this is where we were and this is what we've cut. Working to the number they were given by the Town Administrator and cannot include COVID. But this is a go slow and I will probably send a message to the Town Meeting Members I represent to hang on until November. Support we don't put more money in a pot we can't reach and we need to look at CIP and OPEBs.

Pam: I will share the question I asked to be forwarded to Nancy Heller when she comes on Thursday to talk about additional funds for the high school. My question parallels Paul's comment. I have sent a question to Nancy Heller regarding her comment that we already have this funding and interest rates have dropped, so voters will see no increase. Wonder about the perception in the community of this in view of all of the other cuts we have to be making. Wonder how we can deal with the perception.

Steve: Not disputing conclusion that we can't touch pensions for FY 21 but given Retirement Board and State have a say – but why can't we push this for a decision given special circumstances? A: Cliff will get answer from Melissa or Mel on Thursday. They didn't challenge the notion of looking at this for FY 22, however.

Trash Funds - \$750 cost of trash pickup – might want to revisit this and consider based on use.

Elena Huisman, Chair of Brookline Bicycle Advisory Committee but her comments tonight are representative of her personal opinion and do not represent those of the Committee. She thanked the Advisory Committee and others for all the thoughtful comments and deliberations. Recognize need to balance the Town's budget. Stress need for infrastructure and need for cyclist and pedestrian safety. It is imperative that we maintain those line items in the budget. Maintain commitment to safe streets and help move Brookline toward its climate goals.

Carla: Such irony that this pandemic is killing so many people but improving the air quality in so many communities. Following up on the question about furloughs there are funded positions that aren't being filled. Unfilled positions will continue to be unfilled; we also have funded internships that probably will not be filled.

Also, I love the idea of being nimble but trying to think of what would be unforeseen and critical that isn't related to COVID that we may be asked to support so we can ask to have money put in reserve funds. If we try to adhere to hard and fast rule of "unforeseen" what do we think we will be funding? Perhaps a second reserve fund with less tighter strings? i.e. Building Department being unable to do its work with insufficient number of people – although it could have been foreseen, we might want to be able to fund that position.

Christine: The problem right now is that there is a lot we don't know. So we might be able to re-open the schools as long as there are only 15 students in each room. Might that be unforeseen? Or, the Health Dept. uses Marijuana funds and we only get half the expected amount- is that unforeseen? Or the state has a major short fall and passes the cuts along to us...

Neil W: Post the smoothing what will happen at Town Meeting when the number is made public – the big reveal. If we rely on just this public hearing where we have such little public awareness – sometime after June 2nd there be another opportunity for the public to comment and then determine our process and how we will come up with a recommendation.

Carla: Spoke to Sandy and let him know we didn't expect to have a decision about the high school. He is also ok if the Advisory Committee doesn't take a vote by the time of the Combined Report. It will be difficult for us to schedule a meeting and then expect Mike to do the write up and meet the deadline for even the supplemental mailing. We need to think this through – yes it is important to keep the public informed but we also have an obligation to Town Meeting Members to give them time to digest it all before a vote.

Neil W: There is a tradeoff here and think we need at least one opportunity for the public to yell at us.

Mark Levy: Suggested offering early retirement packages to some – increase reserves; you will be cutting despite what the administration comes up with, so what is your philosophy, and where are the tradeoffs? Cutting capital improvements often means that conditions will deteriorate further and will be more costly to repair down the line; many service departments are already understaffed like the Town Clerk's office so you need to look at what departments would be hurt most and which have a little more padding.

Amy: Let fellow Town Meeting Members know about this budget discussion and what we are considering. Get out a preliminary message from the Advisory Committee – maybe we are putting ourselves on the firing line but give them a heads up on the type of things we are looking at and why we are prioritizing them how we are.

Chair: Open Meeting Law limits us in some respect.

Amy: Notes from the meeting in a letter by way of information from the Advisory Committee, get the information out there and letting the public know we are doing our best. Perhaps listing the ideas and circulating a draft.

David-Marc: Completely agree with Amy. Post something on the website and then post it on the list is not a violation. This is our budget and we will be in the crosshairs so it is important that we be open, clear and transparent as to what we are proposing and the process.

Janet: Send message out to all of our precincts, to the people we represent.

Jules Milner-Brage: Can the Advisory Committee ask Town Administrator for eligible expenses that are reimbursable by CARES Act funds or FEMA so they can be publically disclosed? An example regarding the moving target of the content of the Town Administrator's balanced budget, to be released on June 2, may contain ideas to increase revenue. Earlier this evening, the Select Board, per request from Mel Kleckner, discussed the topic of perhaps actually following through on the previously planned parking meter increases, either at the start of FY21 or half way through. (The original, pre-Covid FY21 budget plan projected that meter-rate increase to yield approximately \$754,000.)

Also, when we talk about all these budget things \$6.5M in leases – consuming substantial headspace – does it all need to be frontloaded as multiyear expense?

A: That CIP was pulled together before the pandemic. The leases aren't being paid ahead of time; the FY21 budget covers leases for Maimonides School and the two temples where BEEP programs take place, plus 68% of those leases for the next 5 years. The year was unusual because of all the free cash so the idea was, since we didn't expect to have that amount of free cash in FY 22 and 23 and to avoid bumping other projects out in FY 22 and FY 23 – we'd sequester the money in classroom capacity. With different immigration rules, fewer students traveling from abroad in the coming years, will we even need all that space? We don't know.

Christine: \$300M budget and \$13M shortfall. People will have difficulty getting their head around it. Talk about head counts because that will be more real to them. Need to explain to them what the impact of \$13M on a budget we were careful with to begin with. We have been conscientious about keeping the budget moderate. There wasn't a lot of fat to begin with. We should ask not just Department by Department but also a total head count of how many folks we are going to cut.

Carol L.: Two different faculty meetings and how they discussed dealing with budgets – one was to look at core mission and do everything they could to preserve it. The other was we want everyone to share. No one wants to make tough choices and take leadership. Our Town does have a mission statement and we should revisit that and remember what our primary job as municipal government is and our responsibility to our citizens.

Bob Lepson: Thank you Carol. The core mission/core values concept is spot on. Well-articulated. The question is what are these values and what is our core mission? That is what will bring out the public to comment.

Neil W: What will bring the public to comment is when their particular favorite program is cut.

Bob Lepson: Yes, in connection to a "core value."

Carol C: This discussion has been interesting but until we see what the Administrator is going to propose as a budget we are spinning our wheels.

9:00 PM Public Meeting

1. Further discussion & vote offer no recommendation to Annual Town Meeting for all articles other than Articles 3-15; 18; 19; and 25

A **MOTION** was made and seconded to offer no recommend to Annual Town Meeting for all articles other than Articles 3-15; 18; 19; and 25 using the language below. By a roll-call **VOTE** of 28-0-0 of the Advisory Committee the motion passes.

“Due to the COVID-19 crisis the Advisory Committee voted to pursue a limited warrant for the Annual Town Meeting to meet the challenges of conducting an alternate form of town meeting and alleviate the number of public meetings and public hearings conducted during the state of emergency. The Advisory Committee offers no recommendation under this article.”

Other Business

Update to Warrant Article 25 – final decision was to take both licenses out of Washington Square, put one in Coolidge Corner and one in Brookline Village.

A **MOTION** to adjourn was made, seconded and voted unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 pm.

Documents Presented:

- Public Comments regarding FY 21 Budget
- Memo from Meredith Mooney, Economic Development and Long-Term Planning Department regarding recommendation about how the remaining Washington Square special liquor licenses should be redistributed per Warrant Article 25.
- Warrant Article 25 language and explanation.
- Meeting Slides from May 22 Town / School Partnership meeting ([follow this link to view](#))

	Attendance	Vote 1
# Votes Yes	29	28
# Votes No		0
# Votes Abstain		0
Vote Description:		VOTE TO Offer no recommendation to Annual Town Meeting for all articles other than Articles 3-15; 18; 19; and 25 using SB language
	<i>Present</i>	<i>Enter Y, N or A</i>
Carla Benka	P	Y
Ben Birnbaum	p	Y
Harry Bohrs	P	Y
Cliff Brown	P	y
Carol Caro	P	Y
John Doggett	P	Y
Dennis Doughty	P	Y
Harry Friedman	P	Y
Janet Gelbart	P	Y
David-Marc Goldstein	P	Y
Neil Gordon	P	Y
Susan Granoff	P	Y
Amy Hummel	P	Y
Alisa Jonas	P	Y
Janice Kahn	P	Y

Steve Kanes	P	Y
David Lescohier	P	Y
Carol Levin	P	Y
Fred Levitan	P	Y
Pam Lodish	P	Y
Carlos Ridruejo	P	Y
Lee Selwyn	P	Y
Kim Smith	P	Y
Claire Stampfer	P	Y
Charles Swartz	P	Y
Paul Warren	P	Y
Christine Westphal	P	Y
Neil Wishinsky	P	Y
Mike Sandman	P	

Lisa Portscher

From: Lisa Portscher
Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 5:45 PM
To: Alisa Jonas (alisa@jonasdays.net); Amy Hummel ; Ben Birnbaum; Carla Benka; Carlos Ridruejo; Carol Caro; Carol S Levin; Christine Westphal; Chuck Swartz ; Claire Stampfer; Clifford Brown; David Lescohier; Dennis Doughty ; DM Goldstein ; Fred Levitan; Harry Bohrs; Harry K. Friedman; Janet Gelbart; Janice Kahn ; John Doggett ; Kim Smith; Lee Selwyn ; Michael Sandman; Neil Gordon; Neil Wishinsky; Pamela Lodish; Paul Warren; Steven Kanes; Susan Granoff
Subject: Public Comments to Review

From: Amanda Zimmerman [mailto:alzimmerman@gmail.com]
Sent: Sunday, May 24, 2020 8:49 PM
To: Carla Benka; Lisa Portscher
Subject: FY 21 and the importance of infrastructure to support pedestrians and cyclists

Dear Advisory Capital Subcommittee,

As Massachusetts has begun to relax some restrictions on activities during the pandemic, Brookline needs to establish safe outdoor spaces for recreational activities and commuting in what will likely be a prolonged period of social distancing. This is both a public health and an economic imperative. A critical component is the provision of adequate safe spaces for pedestrian, wheelchair, and bicycle transportation and commercial activities.

Many Brookline residents who previously would have taken public transport or hailed a taxi etc, will not feel safe doing so now. Bicycling has become an increasingly common choice for commuting and shopping, especially for our residents who don't own cars. Yet many fear injury from motor vehicles (the risk of which is stark as traffic fatalities have increased while vehicular traffic significantly decreased in MA). We need to invest in infrastructure to make it easier and safer for people to get to work and support our businesses. This will require secure space on our roads for pedestrians and cyclists, and expanding and protecting space the Transportation Board has already designated for this purpose. I urge you to prioritize and increase bicycle and pedestrian spending when discussing FY21 Capital Improvements, even in light of predicted budget shortfalls, as these expenditures are needed now and will help us plan for the future simultaneously.

Best,
Amanda

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Amanda Zimmerman, Ph.D.
51 John Street
alzimmerman@gmail.com

From: Jules Milner-Brage [mailto:jules@milner-brage.com]
Sent: Monday, May 25, 2020 7:00 AM
To: Carla Benka; Mike Sandman; Bernard Greene
Cc: Lisa Portscher; Kate MacGillivray; Todd Kirrane; Kara Brewton; Erin Gallentine; Jacob Meunier
Subject: Comment on FY 2021 Budget and Special Appropriations / CIP

Members of the Advisory Committee and Select Board:

Thank you for your service exploring revisions to Brookline's FY 2021 budget to help the Town navigate the dual health and economic crisis presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

I would like to offer some comments---

Public works can provide essential support for public safety and health, economic resilience and vitality, and environmental sustainability in ways relevant to addressing both the Covid-19 crisis and the climate change crisis.

The Beacon Street Olmsted Bridle Path restoration feasibility and concept design study is a prime example of such an effort. It is slated to commence early in FY 2021, enabled in part via approximately \$33,000 allocated in FY 2021 in the Town's CIP. This \$33,000 comprises a little less than a final 1/5 of the total funds needed for this study to proceed. The rest of the funds (a little more than 4/5 of those needed) were previously appropriated by the Town and State in FY 2020 budgets.

If the Advisory Committee, Select Board, or Town Meeting were to defer or cut this relatively modest \$33,000 sum for the Beacon Bridleway study from the FY 2021 budget, it could both imperil the Town's ability to leverage the funds expressly appropriated for the study by the State (\$50,000) and it could derail the Town's readiness to seize potential further federal and state funding opportunities, especially those that may arise via medium-term programs to support economic recovery via infrastructure investment.

Potential federal funding opportunities might be like the "Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery [TIGER]" grant program of the US Department of Transportation, which was initiated after the 2008-2009 financial crisis. The City of Boston received a \$15.5-million TIGER grant to support implementation of the "Connect Historic Boston" route of improved cycling and walking facilities along Staniford Street, Causeway Street, Commercial Street, and Atlantic Avenue.

To meet the challenges of both the immediate and longer-term crises, Brookline decision-makers would be wise, both strategically and fiscally, to not just continue implementation of public safety improvements---for example, to better support walking, cycling, and similar (affordable, healthy, economically vital, and environmentally friendly) uses of the town's public ways, especially when via inexpensive methods/materials---but also to continue efforts that are already on deck to study/design these safety improvements.

Right now, people need to keep more interpersonal distance when walking and cycling to avoid spreading the novel virus, highlighting current deficiencies in accommodation for these activities. And at the same time, the share of community members' essential outings made via these modes of travel seems to be greater than ever. This is a pattern the Town should try to sustain, and actively plan for, to support a strong and equitable Covid-19 recovery that also helps to address the climate change crisis.

Public works efforts to sustain and improve safe function of the public space in the town's streets and parks, including the planned Beacon Bridleway study, were important before the current crisis and they are perhaps even more important now.

Thank you for your consideration,

---Jules

(Aspinwall Hill, Precinct 12)

From: Brookline GreenSpace Alliance [mailto:info@brooklinegreenspace.org]

Sent: Tuesday, May 26, 2020 11:36 AM

To: msandman1943@gmail.com; Carla Benka; Lisa Portscher

Cc: Todd Kirrane; Erin Gallentine

Subject: Remarks to the Advisory Committee public hearing 6/26

To the Advisory Committee,

The Brookline GreenSpace Alliance, Brookline's 33 year old environmental advocacy and education organization, believes the walking and cycling related DPW projects in the CIP in FY 2021 should be funded. We recognize that these are uncertain times that demand the Town's close analysis and flexibility. At the same time, we note the goal in the FY21 Financial Plan to maintain a strong focus on sustainability and climate action, and we need especially now to recognize a greater dependence on walking/biking modes of travel.

The COVID-19 crisis has raised our consciousness of the need to expand our funding for pedestrian infrastructure, specifically addressing wider walkways and selected street changes for adequate social distancing and pedestrian/bicycle movement. As the economy is re-opened there will likely be an increase in bicycle and pedestrian travel as an alternative to crowded MBTA vehicles and increased outdoor seating; and the already apparent increase in use of our parks demands attention and solutions to overcrowding which prevents physical distancing.

We ask that you remain steadfast in funding streetscape, park, and transportation modifications that help Brookline face the current crisis and ongoing environmental concerns.

Arlene Mattison, President

Brookline GreenSpace Alliance

www.brooklinegreenspace.org

Lisa Portscher

Subject: FW: Keep safe bicycling infrastructure and study items in CIP FY21

From: csnow2@verizon.net

Date: May 25, 2020 at 3:56:07 PM EDT

To: Mike Sandman <msandman@brooklinema.gov>, rcvben@earthlink.net

Cc: Bernard Greene <bgreene@brooklinema.gov>, bfranco@brooklinema.gov, rfernandez@brooklinema.gov, hhamilton@brooklinema.gov, nancyhellerbrookline@gmail.com, Chris Dempsey <christopher.dempsey@gmail.com>, Todd Kirrane <tkirrane@brooklinema.gov>

Subject: Keep safe bicycling infrastructure and study items in CIP FY21

TO: Mike Sandman, Chair
Carla Benka, Vice Chair
Advisory Committee

DATE: May 24, 2020

FROM: Cynthia Snow and Irving Kurki

COPIES: Select Board members
Chris Dempsey, Chair, Transportation Board
Todd Kirrane, Transportation Administrator

RE: Proposed changes to FY 21 Budget

We are writing to *oppose* the proposed changes to the FY 21 budget that we understand are forthcoming from the Capital Subcommittee regarding postponing improvements to bicycle infrastructure for a year or more.

We would appreciate your sharing this memo with the other Advisory Committee members.

Current Situation

Brookline made early and important improvements on Beacon and Harvard Streets and Longwood Avenue to improve safety for cyclists and pedestrians during the current pandemic. The Town has been nationally recognized for these improvements. Many other communities locally and across the country have made similar and greater improvements—some of which are expected to become permanent.

Looking Ahead

As the current crisis eases and travel begins to increase, many people will be leery of riding public transit for fear of infection. If the only other option available for “safe” travel is the personal vehicle, our streets—already unacceptably congested before this crisis—will become even more congested. This is therefore the time to consider expanding rather than contracting or postponing improvements to bicycle (and other micromobility) and pedestrian infrastructure. Giving commuters a safe alternative to private vehicles could help to alleviate congestion on the streets and help to forestall the next great crisis of climate change. The National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO) has issued a report (kept up to date on line) of what has/is being done, along with transportation recommendations for meeting the current crisis and supporting recovery.

Beacon Street

Beacon Street is a major route from Brookline and points west to and from Boston, and it is also one of the most dangerous streets for bicycles and other micromobility modes. Two of the three proposed items in the CIP budget seek to improve safety on Beacon Street and should be accelerated rather than delayed.

Beacon Street outbound from Boston City line to Carlton Street: The approved upgrade to protect cyclists from moving motor vehicles and the door zone of parked cars should go forward: moving the bike lane between the curb and the parking lane, as has been done in Boston just to the east of the Town line. The stretch from St. Mary's Street to Carlton Street is documented to have the worst incidence in Brookline of motor vehicles obstructing the bike lane, which endangers cyclists.

Funds for Beacon Street Bridleway Study: The study is a key step in the long-range project to restore a bicycle/micromobility path along the former Olmsted Bridleway; the Town is to provide just a small remaining portion of the study cost in FY21 if not met by a state DOT grant. This project has won nearly universal approbation from the public and should not be delayed by a failure of the Town to guarantee the small amount of supplemental funding for the study to move forward.



Town of Brookline

Massachusetts

**Department of Planning and
Community Development**

Town Hall, 3rd Floor
333 Washington Street
Brookline, MA 02445-6899
(617) 730-2130 Fax (617) 730-2442
TTY (617) 730-2327

Alison Steinfeld
Director

To: Select Board, Advisory Board, and Mel Kleckner

From: Meredith L. Mooney, Economic Development and Long-Term Planner

Cc: Alison Steinfeld, Kara Brewton, Small Business Development Committee, Anne Meyers, and Paul Saner

Date: May 26, 2020

Re: Staff Recommendation: Redistribution of Remaining Washington Square Special Liquor Licenses (Warrant Article 25)

Background:

Warrant Article 25 proposes the redistribution of any remaining special liquor licenses originally allocated to Washington Square to Coolidge Corner and/or Brookline Village, Brookline's largest commercial areas, where - pre-Coronavirus - there was the greatest demand for liquor licenses. Through Warrant Article 25, the Select Board would be authorized to file a petition reflecting one of the five possible permutations for redistributing any remaining special liquor licenses.

Recommendation:

Although there remains a tremendous amount of uncertainty around the impact that the Coronavirus will ultimately have on the vibrancy of Brookline's commercial areas, the Economic Development and Long-Term Planning Division believes that over the next two years (i.e. the amount of time that the special liquor licenses would be extended if redistributed) the greatest demand for liquor licenses will continue to be in Brookline Village and Coolidge Corner. Therefore, Economic Development recommends that the Select Board redistribute the two remaining Washington Square special liquor licenses according to Scenario 1 in which one special liquor license would be reallocated to Brookline Village and the other to Coolidge Corner.

If the Select Board chooses to accept this recommendation, the final version of this warrant article to be included in the Town Meeting Combined Report would be as follows:

To see if the Town will authorize and empower the Select Board to file a petition, in substantially the following form, with the General Court:

AN ACT AMENDING CHAPTER 268 OF THE ACTS OF 2018 TO REALLOCATE TWO REMAINING LIQUOR LICENSES FROM THE WASHINGTON SQUARE TARGET COMMERCIAL AREA TO BROOKLINE VILLAGE TARGET COMMERCIAL AREA AND THE COOLIDGE CORNER TARGET COMMERCIAL AREA

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. (A) Section 1 Paragraph (b)(1) of Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2018 is hereby amended by striking out the word “Three” and inserting in place thereof the following word – “Four”.

(B) Section 1 Paragraph (b)(2) of Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2018 is hereby amended by striking out the word “Five” and inserting in place thereof the following word – “Six”.

(C) Section 1 Paragraph (b)(4) of Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2018 is hereby amended by striking out the word “Three” and inserting in place thereof the following word – “One”.

(D) Section 1 Paragraph (f) of Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2018 is hereby amended by striking out the number “2” and inserting in place thereof the following number – “4”.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

The General Court may make vary the form and substance of the requested legislation within the scope of the general public objectives of this petition. Or act on anything relative thereto.

ARTICLE 25

Petitioner: Sam Glasgow and other residents including members of the Small Business Development Committee

ARTICLE 25

To see if the Town will authorize and empower the Select Board to file a petition with the General Court amending Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2018 to reallocate any remaining unused liquor licenses from the Washington Square Target Commercial Area to either the Brookline Village Target Commercial Area or the Coolidge Corner Target Commercial Area, or to both such areas, and to extend the term of any such reallocated liquor license by two years. Or act on anything relative thereto.

EXPLANATION:

In the fall of 2017, Town Meeting authorized the Select Board to petition the state for 35 additional liquor licenses. A year later, the Legislature granted the Town 12 special liquor licenses, which were allotted to four "Target Commercial Areas": Brookline Village (3), Coolidge Corner (5), JFK Crossing (1), and Washington Square (3). These full-liquor licenses were granted with two important stipulations: the licenses will expire on October 11, 2020 (i.e. two years after the authorizing legislation's effective date) and cannot be utilized outside of the Target Commercial Area to which they were allocated.

As of February 28, 2020, two of the three special liquor licenses originally allocated to Washington Square remain unused. Two Washington Square restaurants have expressed interest in obtaining one of these special liquor licenses, however, just ten months shy of the October 2020 deadline, no restaurants have officially begun the process of obtaining a special liquor license. To ensure that these remaining special liquor licenses do not go unused, the Small Business Development Committee proposes that the Town petition the Legislature for approval to redistribute any remaining special liquor licenses originally allocated to Washington Square to Coolidge Corner and/or Brookline Village, where there is greater demand for liquor licenses. All of the special liquor licenses allocated to Brookline Village and Coolidge Corner, Brookline's largest commercial areas, were claimed within a year.

This warrant article proposes that any remaining special liquor licenses in Washington Square be reallocated to Coolidge Corner and/or Brookline Village, and that the deadline for issuing any reallocated liquor licenses be extended by two years.

There are five possible permutations of how the Washington Square liquor licenses could be reallocated:

- In the event that two Washington Square liquor licenses remain:
 - o Scenario 1: Redistribute one license to Brookline Village and one license to Coolidge Corner

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- Scenario 2: Redistribute two licenses to Coolidge Corner
- Scenario 3: Redistribute two licenses to Brookline Village

- In the event that only one Washington Square liquor license remains:
 - Scenario 4: Redistribute one license to Brookline Village
 - Scenario 5: Redistribute one license to Coolidge Corner

Through this warrant article, the Select Board would be authorized to file a petition reflecting one of the five possible permutations for redistributing any remaining special liquor licenses with the General Court in the following form, the final version of which is anticipated to be included in the Town Meeting Combined Report:

To see if the Town will authorize and empower the Select Board to file a petition, in substantially the following form, with the General Court:

AN ACT AMENDING CHAPTER 268 OF THE ACTS OF 2018 TO REALLOCATE *[INSERT NUMBER OF REMAINING WASHINGTON SQUARE SPECIAL LIQUOR LICENSES]* REMAINING LIQUOR LICENSES FROM THE WASHINGTON SQUARE TARGET COMMERCIAL AREA TO BROOKLINE VILLAGE TARGET COMMERCIAL AREA AND THE COOLIDGE CORNER TARGET COMMERCIAL AREA

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. (A) Section 1 Paragraph (b)(1) of Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2018 is hereby amended by striking out the word “Three” and inserting in place thereof the following word – “*[INSERT REVISED NUMBER]*”.

(B) Section 1 Paragraph (b)(2) of Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2018 is hereby amended by striking out the word “Five” and inserting in place thereof the following word – “*[INSERT REVISED NUMBER]*”.

(C) Section 1 Paragraph (b)(4) of Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2018 is hereby amended by striking out the word “Three” and inserting in place thereof the following word – “*[INSERT REVISED NUMBER]*”.

(D) Section 1 Paragraph (f) of Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2018 is hereby amended by striking out the number “2” and inserting in place thereof the following number – “4”.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon its passage.

The General Court may make vary the form and substance of the requested legislation within the scope of the general public objectives of this petition. Or act on anything relative thereto.