

Minutes

Economic Development Advisory Board

October 3, 2022 6:30PM

Held remotely via Zoom

Committee members in attendance (noted by Y/N):

Anne Meyers, Co-Chair	Y	Derrick Choi	Y	Carol Levin	N	Marilyn Newman	Y
Paul Saner, Co-Chair	Y	Alan Christ	Y	Ken Lewis	Y	Al Raine	Y
Cliff Brown*	Y	Sandi Silk	Y	Tom Nally	Y	Zeina Talje	Y

*Arrived late or left early

Staff & consultants present: Meredith Mooney, Victor Panak, Aaron Norris

Attendees included: Jesse Gray, Wendy Stahl, Kara Brewton, David Pollak, John Bowman, Steffani Boudreau, Dennis DeWitt, Lisa Cunningham, Elton Elperin, Carla Benka, Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert, John VanScoyoc, Perry Grossman, Wendy Machmuller, Jonathan Klein, Susie Roberts

Meeting Materials: <https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/Index/2936>

- Article 27 – FFF Zoning
- Article 27 Explanation
- Article 13 – Design Review after Demo Delay
- Article 13 Explanation
- Comments on the Three Demolition Warrant Articles by Al Raine
- Revised Article 13 with Tracked Changes 9-28-22
- Revised Article 13 Clean 9-28-22
- Demolition Data 2017-2022
- Public Comment – Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert – 9-27-22
- Public Comment – Sean Lynn-Jones – 10-3-22
- DRAFT EDAB Minutes 9.12.22

Meeting Recording:

https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/_vo8EwPkxaZJsDljaPJWldZarcdbwFt5v4oVXuWJURyR-eVxasthD8cZb8fV824w.TdX2jJBzmuWSg8la

Opening Remarks

Anne Meyers opened the meeting. Paul Saner provided a brief overview of the schedule for the meeting and noted that Warrant Articles 17, 20, and 32 had been withdrawn prior to the meeting.

Public Hearing: Discussion of Fall 2022 Town Meeting Warrant Articles

Article 27: Create a new Zoning By-law to prohibit new on-site fossil fuel infrastructure (Gray, TMM10)

Jesse Gray (petitioner) provided the Board with a presentation on Article 27, with a focus on how this article is different from previous attempts at a fossil-fuel-free by-law. He identified the removal of exceptions for cooking facilities, removal of exceptions for water heaters, and a change in the definition of a significant renovation as the main changes.

Sandi Silk raised concerns about competitiveness. She indicated that developers she works with do not see parity in costs between all-electric buildings and traditional buildings. She also expressed frustration that money is being spent installing new gas lines. Mr. Gray said he would have preferred that money being spent on electrification and also noted that a number of peer communities are also adopting FFF by-laws, which he believes will alleviate concerns about competitiveness.

Marilyn Newman asked for clarity about the exemption for lab-type uses and why the language had changed. Mr. Gray said the new language is taken directly from state statute.

Ken Lewis asked for details about when the requirements would apply to a restaurant renovation. Mr. Gray indicated that, as long as they are not moving or installing fossil-fuel piping, the by-law would not apply. Mr. Lewis also asked about how to identify financial hardships and Derrick Choi and Alan Christ discussed how this issue is dealt with in terms of ADA requirements.

Zeina Talje expressed concerns with the cost of constructing fossil-fuel-free buildings compared to traditional buildings. She also noted even electric buildings burn fossil fuels because the electric grid is not fully powered by renewable sources. She also raised concerns with the possibility that an FFF by-law could incentivize demolitions.

Alan Christ stated that he believes electrification is not significantly more costly but that passive house and net-zero standards do increase the costs.

Paul Saner discussed some of his research related to requirements for cooking facilities and noted differences in how Washington DC, New York, and Boston treated residential and commercial cooking facilities. Mr. Saner asked that an amendment be made that would exempt commercial cooking facilities.

Derrick Choi asked whether the petitioners had reached out to the Brookline restaurant owners about the requirement for commercial cooking facilities. Mr. Gray said his team had been in contact with restaurant owners – he indicated that the feedback from the restaurant owners is mixed.

Tom Nally expressed concerns about the electric grid’s capacity to accommodate a growing number of all-electric buildings. Mr. Gray discussed the cost and difficulties related to upgrading the power grid.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Anne Meyers closed the public hearing.

Mr. Saner suggested that the Board vote to make a recommendation on the article and suggested that commercial cooking should be exempted. The Board discussed Mr. Saner’s proposed change and the article in general.

Mr. Saner moved that EDAB recommend favorable action on Warrant Article 27 with an amendment that would exempt commercial cooking facilities from the requirements of the article. Al Raine seconded the motion. The Board voted (8-1-2) to support the motion with votes as indicated below:

<i>Anne Meyers</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>Derrick Choi</i>	<i>Y</i>	<i>Carol Levin</i>	<i>n/a</i>	<i>Marilyn Newman</i>	<i>Y</i>
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Paul Saner	Y	Alan Christ	Y	Ken Lewis	Y	Al Raine	Y
Cliff Brown	A	Sandi Silk	N	Tom Nally	Y	Zeina Talje	Y

Y= Yes N= No A= Abstain n/a= Absent

Article 13: Amend Section 5.09 of the Town’s Zoning By-law to require design review after the expiration of a stay of demolition (Robert, TMM17, Elperin, DeWitt)

Susie Roberts (petitioner) provided the Board with a presentation of the warrant article, focusing on concerns with demolitions and an explanation of how the article would help alleviate the problem. Elton Elperin added that the Design Review process usually results in a better building.

Sandi Silk asked for clarity about the Design Review process. Elton Elperin, Victor Panak, and Susie Roberts provided clarity on the Design Review process.

Al Raine said he has concerns about the warrant article, believing that the article would not be effective in its stated goal due to its broadness and the potential disincentive to development that the article might introduce. He also noted how this article could complicate the Town’s response to the MBTA Communities Act.

Tom Nally said he is a strong proponent of design review as a process. He also said he feels it is very important to maintain the character of Brookline’s streetscapes and that three of the properties adjacent to his property were teardowns with mixed results. He expressed support for the article.

Alan Christ stated he has mixed feelings about the article. He is concerned that it may disincentivize density in areas where additional development is desirable. He said that he would be supportive of a stronger design review section in general. He said he is not inclined to support the article.

Sandi Silk agreed with comments from Mr. Nally about the importance of design review but also agreed with concerns voiced by Mr. Raine and Mr. Christ. She said she supports the intent but does not support the article’s effect of adding time and cost to the construction of housing.

Derrick Choi questioned the efficacy of the scope and scale of the article. Mr. Elperin explained that the design review process could proceed concurrently with the stay of demolition.

Public Comments

Jennifer Dopazo Gilbert asked some clarifying questions about the process desired by the petitioners. She then asked that partial demolitions be exempted, noting that the demolition review process applies to a wide variety of projects. Finally, she noted that the proposed article would not apply to single- and two-family dwellings that can use M.G.L. c.40A Section 6.

Anne Meyers closed the public hearing.

Susie Roberts emphasized that Design Review already applies to a wide variety of projects and therefore she contended that the expansion of Design Review to apply as proposed by this article would not represent a significant expansion.

Dennis DeWitt (petitioner) indicated that his research had suggested a lack of new dwelling units in recent teardown/rebuilds in S, T, F, and M districts.

Elton Elperin (petitioner) did not feel that the article would discourage new density. He does believe that the economics of redevelopment would be affected.

Paul Saner said he is adamantly opposed to the warrant article. He highlighted what he believes is an unnecessarily expansive scope of the effects of the article. He suggested that the problem with demolitions in the T and F zones is a problem better dealt with through incentives.

Ken Lewis asked whether EDAB could wait to vote until after the Planning Board hearing to see what they have to say. Mr. Saner said that the timing would not work well.

Mr. Brown moved that EDAB recommend favorable action on Warrant Article 13. Paul Saner seconded the motion. The Board voted (0-9-2) for no action on the motion with votes as indicated below:

Anne Meyers	N	Derrick Choi	N	Carol Levin	n/a	Marilyn Newman	N
Paul Saner	N	Alan Christ	N	Ken Lewis	N	Al Raine	N
Cliff Brown	A	Sandi Silk	N	Tom Nally	A	Zeina Talje	N

Y= Yes N= No A= Abstain n/a= Absent

Article 32: Create a new General By-law Section 8.40 related to inholder requirements for the prevention of human trafficking. (Davis, TMM17, Levin, TMM17, Margolis, TMM17)

This item was not discussed because the warrant article was withdrawn shortly before the meeting.

Other Updates

ARPA-funded Economic Development projects:

Meredith Mooney provided an update on the use of ARPA funds received by the Economic Development and Long-Term Planning Division, including the Brookline Arts Makes Community project, the Coolidge Corner storefront pop-up project, and the Centre Street Lot Parking and Curb Management and Utilization Study.

Coolidge Corner BID:

Ms. Mooney indicated that the Division has started outreach to Coolidge Corner businesses.

10 Brookline Place Committee:

Ms. Mooney highlighted an upcoming community workshop scheduled on October 19th to examine the massing and architecture for the possible redevelopment of 10 Brookline Place

Small Business Development Committee work:

Anne Meyers discussed the SBDC's work on documenting and streamlining the licensing/permitting process for small businesses.

Ms. Mooney noted that interviews were recently held for the last Economic Development and Long-Term Planner position.

Review and approve draft 9/12/2022 meeting minutes

Mr. Raine moved to approve the minutes. Mr. Nally seconded the motion. The Board voted 10-0-1 (Mr. Choi abstained) to approve the minutes.

The meeting was adjourned.