

**Brookline Advisory Committee**  
**Ad Hoc Subcommittee for MBTA-CA Articles STM1-3,4,5 and STM4-1**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Date/Time of Meeting:**

Wednesday, October 11, 2023, 6:00 pm

**Location of Meeting:**

**Zoom: the recording of this meeting can be found here:**

[https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/kKfLr4s2OHOACPOd0NXBR4g1rkvVx8AUkuQo-  
ptWVwLjRLkfx6gqZh8ANmBSGBiv.LYOaY7keZguAKNOo](https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/kKfLr4s2OHOACPOd0NXBR4g1rkvVx8AUkuQo-<br/>ptWVwLjRLkfx6gqZh8ANmBSGBiv.LYOaY7keZguAKNOo)

**Members Present:**

David Pollak (Chair), Katherine Florio, Kelly Hardebeck, Linda Olson Pehlke, Mark Penzel, Lee Selwyn, John Doggett

**Members Absent:**

Carlos Ridruejo

**Others Present:**

Kara Brewton, Maria Morelli, Paul Warren, Michael Rubenstein, Jonathan Klein, Fran Perler, Diane Sokol, Stephanie Ebbert, Joe Callanan, Jonathan Simpson, Laura Knott, Carol Gladstone, Hugh Mattson, Paul Saner, Marion Freedman-Gurspan, Marilyn Newman, Ben Dubin, Dick Benka, [plus others not captured]

**Subject/Agenda Item:**

1. Discussion of and possible votes on WA 3,4,5 and STM 4 Article 1.
2. Other Business

**Substance of discussion: (attach additional pages if needed)**

Introductions, and Public Comment is received.

- D. Benka speaks regarding his concerns about the Harvard Street Plan, including, but not limited to, setbacks, parking, incentives, and windows.
- F. Perler expresses concerns about Harvard Street plan, including, but not limited to, that she doesn't want a two-mile long strip mall and feels that there is little difference between the plan and allowing 40B development.
- J. Klein, speaking in support of Harvard Street Plan, urges that we not forget the housing challenges we need to address, that no plan is perfect, that neighbors get a voice, not a veto, and that we not get buried in the weeds.

Minutes of September 26, 2023 Meeting are approved unanimously.

D. Pollak again explains his conflict of interest disclosure (his architecture firm will be submitting a proposal to Brookline Housing Authority in pursuit of the Walnut High project commission). No concerns expressed based on the facts presented.

Select Board Member Paul Warren states that he has convened a small working group with two representatives each from Brookline By Design ("BBD") (Linda Pehlke and John Doggett) and Yes! In Brookline (names not disclosed) in the hope of ironing out the differences between the two organized groups most involved in advocating on opposite

sides of the Harvard Street Plan. Discussion follows, in which it is disclosed that the group is negotiating around the amendments proposed by BBD and that progress has been made but that more work needs to be done. Additional meetings of the group are planned.

D. Pollak discusses the topics around which he hopes to organize the Subcommittee's discussions, which include:

- 1) Balancing abutter impacts and planning objectives
- 2) Balancing commercial and housing (and other) planning objectives
- 3) District composition and coherences – what properties are in and out:
  - a. Large opportunity parcels
  - b. Architecturally significant buildings
  - c. Buildings off Harvard Street
- 4) Parking
- 5) Design Standards
- 6) M-Districts, Emerald Island, BHA Walnut High

Fiscal Impacts of MBTACA to town also raised as a relevant topic. Kara Brewton offers to work offline with 3 subcommittee members on this topic.

Topics 1-5 are being covered by P. Warren's group.

Agreement to move start time of October 18 meeting up to 4 pm to avoid conflict with Planning Board meeting that evening.

Senior Town Planner M. Morelli presented, using a Powerpoint, an overview of the Harvard Street Plan, organized around 7 "Themes":

- 1) Cohesive Main Street Pattern
- 2) Historic Preservation/Detering Demolition with New Mechanisms
- 3) Supporting Ground Floor Commercial
- 4) Affordable Housing
- 5) Adjacency: Transition to smaller residential (two-family districts)
- 6) Sustainable Site Design
- 7) Accessibility

Many questions were raised by subcommittee members, to which M. Morelli responded.

M. Morelli acknowledged two potential amendments to the Plan. The first would amend the definition of "Commercial" on page 75, and the second would reduce the requirement for hotel parking.

L. Selwyn expressed a concern that that very little will get built because of financial disincentives.

L. Pehlke expressed a concern that more time is needed because, inter alia, we do not yet have the National Registry standards that would be applicable and there is not an acceptable definition of "active use."

K. Florio asked questions regarding the Plan's consideration of the impact of new development on rodents and garbage collection.

K. Brewton indicated that the 40B window, which is now again open, has attracted just one proposal so far, and the window will likely close soon in the fall and remain closed for another couple of years. Her statement was in response to a question about the pace of development that can be expected going forward if the Plan is approved. She indicated that many Harvard Street properties are owned by family trusts, which tends to slow down decision-making on development.

Incentives for green space were discussed. For the largest sites, there is a 10% requirement, but the two largest sites, TJ Maxx and Stop n' Shop, are not included. Green roofs are permitted.

The Plan prevents its “as of right” zoning from “leaking” into neighboring more restrictive residential districts if properties are merged.

There was a discussion about the need for the Planning Department to respond to the sets of written questions submitted earlier by three subcommittee members.

Meeting Adjourned.

**Action/Votes Taken:** Approval of Minutes

**The following Documents/Exhibits were posted to the Meeting Agenda and/or presented at Meeting:**

- [Public Comment WA 1 STM 4 and MBTACA Articles](#)
- [AC Ad Hoc Subcommittee MBTA-CA Hearing Minutes-DRAFT 9.26.2023](#)
- [AC Ad Hoc Subcommittee MBTA-CA Meeting Minutes-DRAFT 9.26.2023](#)
- 1011-2023 Advisory Land Use Sub (presentation by Maria Morelli)