The Public Safety Subcommittee held a public hearing at Town Hall for Article 31. Attendees included Co-Petitioners Scott Englander (TMM-6), Susan Helms Daley (Chatham Circle resident), Jules Milner-Brage (TMM-12), Linda Olson Pehlke (TMM-2), John Bowman (Beals Street resident), C. Scott Ananian (TMM-10), and David Kroop (Osborne Road resident; David Trevett (Pedestrian Advisory Committee); Cynthia Snow (Bicycle Advisory Committee); Lauryn Allen (BU Journalism student/Daily Free Press); Zachary Myers (Commonwealth Ave. resident); Jan Preheim (Walnut Street resident); Tom Kilday; Todd Kirrane (Transportation staff); Zoe Lynn (Planning staff); and subcommittee members Janice Kahn (chair), Alisa Jonas, Susan Granoff, and David-Marc Goldstein.

**Summary:**

Article 31 comes out of the Select Board Climate Action Summit held in June 2019. It is a resolution asking that the Town address the negative effects that fossil fuel powered transportation has on climate change. The article seeks to develop a comprehensive plan which would include reducing the use of gas powered single occupancy vehicles, encouraging EVs, and improving public ways for non-vehicular use, including walking, biking, and other mobility options.

The petitioners are focusing article 31 on a message of climate change, health, and equity. There are three action areas that are stressed- **Principles**, (Prioritize, Demonstrate, Align Regulations, and Encourage Electric); **Goals and Metrics**- (a long term goal to get the town to “75/25” by 2050, meaning 25% of trips in autos and 75% are human powered or via electric shared rides, and a short term goal of “30/30 by 2030, where 30% of the progress towards the 2050 goals are achieved and 30% of Brookline-owned cars are electric); and a **Timeline**, (asking the Select Board to report details of a program to achieve this no later than the 2020 Annual Town Meeting).

The resolution states that 43% of greenhouse gas emissions in Massachusetts come from transportation. The EPA data indicates that nationwide 29% comes from the transportation sector. The petitioners said that Massachusetts has made progress in reducing greenhouse gasses in other areas and the transportation sector has lagged behind, resulting in a larger percentage of Massachusetts emissions.
Discussion:

The subcommittee was in favor of the article. The discussion of the subcommittee was primarily focused on the last whereas clause and on the financial impact of the article. Brookline is a town with two very different areas, in terms of development, density, walkability and public transit availability. Much of South Brookline was developed in the 1940s. That area of town lacks not only a reliable public transportation network but also the convenient commercial areas and compact residential neighborhoods that developed in North Brookline. Automobile parking, for example, does not cause the same headaches in South Brookline as it does in North Brookline. Solutions and strategies that come out of this effort will need to take different neighborhood needs into account.

The subcommittee received a number of written comments in favor of WA31 that identified sustainable transportation modes as critical to achieving Brookline’s sustainability goals. Harry Margolis (TMM-12) noted that the article aligns with the recommendation of Governor Baker’s task force on transportation that urges “a focus on moving people over moving vehicles”. The subcommittee also received correspondence from Debbie Good Miller, Executive Director of the Brookline Chamber of Commerce, who wanted to know if the business community had been involved in the drafting of the article and whether or not the plan included thinking about the impacts on business, employees, and customers, “including visitors and residents who do not have electric vehicles or bicycles and rely on gas fueled/hybrid cars.” According to both Linda Pehlke and Zoe Lynn, the “sustainability” articles were presented to the Brookline Chamber and the Coolidge Corner Merchants Association, who chose to focus on WAs 15 and 21. Scott Englander noted that the resolution is not prescriptive; rather, it charges a course of action. This is a first step.

The financial impact to the town was also a focus of discussion. It is estimated that hiring a sustainable transportation engineer or planner would cost approximately $82,000 plus benefits. Todd Kirrane has indicated that he needs more staff to carry out the provisions of the article. Given the constraints of the Town budget and the structural deficit in the coming years, the subcommittee was not convinced that this position will be funded anytime soon. Zoe Lynn informed the subcommittee that, once a sustainable transportation engineer/planner was hired, the Town would be eligible for grants which could make the position revenue-neutral.

That said, it is a resolution and not a By-Law and the town can work to implement it over time as resources allow. The subcommittee added the phrase “and Town budget priorities” to # 3 of the first resolved clause to recognize that budget implications of this article will have to be discussed within the annual budget process.

Members of the subcommittee also expressed regret that more emphasis regarding needed Public Transportation improvements with the MBTA was not mentioned in the article. Brookline pays one of the highest assessments the T receives, yet doesn’t seem to have much influence in getting better, more reliable service. Our increasing senior population and their needs were also briefly discussed but is barely mentioned in the article.
**Recommendation:**

The subcommittee voted to amend the article by adding the words “much of” to start the last whereas clause, and added “and Town budgeting priorities” to #3 in the first Resolved clause so it reads “Align our planning and zoning regulations and Town budgeting priorities with our historical streetcar…”

By a 4-0 vote, the subcommittee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on article 31 as amended below:

To see if the Town will adopt the following resolution:

WHEREAS climate change is a major existential threat to humanity and other life on our planet, with impacts felt especially by the poor and powerless;

WHEREAS greenhouse gas emissions are causing climate change, and transportation contributes 43% of these emissions in Massachusetts;

WHEREAS there are many negative health impacts from automobile use, such as serious injuries, air pollution and physical inactivity;

WHEREAS low-occupancy travel via automobile and parking of private automobiles require a disproportionate quantity of space relative to the quantity of people and goods moved;

WHEREAS Brookline public ways currently provide only limited accessibility to non-automobile uses;

WHEREAS traffic congestion and a lack of safe, accessible, reliable alternatives to automobile transportation impose substantial time burdens and costs on individuals;

WHEREAS the Town of Brookline has adopted a Climate Action Plan to prioritize planning to achieve zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050, Town- and community-wide;

WHEREAS the Town of Brookline has adopted a Complete Streets Policy that seeks to shift use to more healthful and sustainable transportation modes by accommodating them equitably in public ways;

WHEREAS replacement of internal combustion-powered transportation with human- and/or electric-powered transportation (and supporting electric charging infrastructure) stands to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, especially when supplied with energy produced via non-fossil-fuel-combustion means; and

WHEREAS much of Brookline historically developed with a pattern of land use and public ways that are amenable to the use of public transit, walking, biking and other space- and energy-efficient modes of transportation and has limited space for personal vehicle use and parking.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that Town Meeting calls upon the Town of Brookline to leverage its preexisting strengths, to:

1. 1) Prioritize safe, space-efficient, and energy-efficient movement of people and goods over the movement and parking of private vehicles when designing and improving our public ways, with particular focus on high-traffic routes, connectivity and directness. This should be accomplished in a manner that gives particular consideration to equity of access and safety for (i) people of a broad range of ages, abilities and financial means, and (ii) use of healthful and sustainable transportation modes.

2. 2) Demonstrate, pilot, and evaluate new public way configurations that improve travel conditions to enable everyone to use healthful and sustainable transportation modes. Reconfigure street usage for temporary events (such as “open streets” and “Park(ing) Day”) to demonstrate the community benefits of utilizing road space for people.

3. 3) Align our planning and zoning regulations and Town budgeting priorities with our historical streetcar-, biking-, and walking-centric (less automobile-dependent) development pattern. Implement “transportation demand management” policies to realign incentives towards utilization of healthful and sustainable transportation modes.

4. 4) Encourage transition of motorized travel to electric vehicles and operating behaviors that eliminate local greenhouse gas emissions, including support for increased electric vehicle charging. This should be accomplished with particular consideration for avoiding any conflicts or interference with healthful and sustainable transportation modes, or with improved travel facilities for these modes.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Town Meeting calls upon the Select Board, in consultation with the Advisory Committee and any other appropriate Boards, Commissions and Committees, to determine a course of action, applying the aforementioned four strategies, to:

5) Work towards a 2050 goal of a “75/25” sustainable transportation mode split, where approximately:

- 75% of trips are by human power (e.g. foot, bike, wheelchair), electric micro-mobility (e.g. e-scooters, e-bikes, e-wheelchairs), or electric shared rides (e.g. electric public transit, electric car-pools), and
- 25% of trips are by single-occupant or single-passenger electric cars or trucks;

Work towards a 2030 “30 + 30” interim goal, where approximately:
30% of the progress needed to meet our 2050 mode split goal is achieved, and

30% of motor vehicles registered in Brookline are electric;

For the 2050 goal, ‘electric’ excludes vehicles that can use internal combustion engines, but for the 2030 goal ‘electric’ includes plug-in hybrids.

6) Develop and implement a strategic infrastructure network to realize these goals (e.g. safe routes to schools; inclusive, protected bike lanes for a diversity of users; electric vehicle charging facilities);

7) Measure and report progress towards these goals; and

8) Establish a Sustainable Transportation Engineer or Planner position to support the advancement of these goals.
AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Town Meeting calls upon the Select Board, et al., to report the details of this course of action no later than the 2020 Annual (May) Town Meeting.

Or act on anything relative thereto.

DOCUMENTS reviewed:


Correspondence: Justin Libby (Addington Road), Jacob Meunier, Harry Margolis (TMM-12), Perry Grossman (Jamaica Road), Tracie Burns (Beals Street), Patricia Maher (Stearns Road), Debbie Good Miller (Exec. Dir., Brookline Chamber of Commerce).