ARTICLE 1
Submitted by: Regina Frawley, TMM16

Between 2000-2005, during the Comprehensive Plan, the Town planned significant growth in population, and stated publicly that “a ninth and probably a tenth elementary school will be necessary”.

In addition, schools such as Pierce, have deteriorated and proved insufficient to house all students in one building. Thus, children are taught in expensive leased spaces. The community is thus dispersed, during these formative years of childhood.

Also, the “Devotion” school, (now Coolidge Corner School) occupied leased space in “Lower Devo” in Coolidge Corner, at considerable costs to Town taxpayers, and additionally, include considerable costs to “upgrade” spaces to make them student and classroom appropriate. These costs are millions annually, and have enhanced the value to private properties, with no additional future economic return to the Town.

Old Lincoln, used regularly as “swing space” is repeatedly cited as inadequate for a school, despite millions invested to improve the building’s use as a “swing space” for schools and even Town Hall, nor even large enough for all students needing space during a renovation., hence the leasing of private properties.

It is time and mandatory that Brookline plan and provide for the planned growth of the population and housing units, to which we have committed, as part of the 15 member Consortium for additional housing in Boston and greater Boston. Brookline will have added thousands of housing units over the next years on top of those several hundred already permitted.

Newbury is adequate for ANY growth of student population, so that the struggles and divisiveness witnessed across town, neighborhood against neighborhood, ceases. Brookline has and will always have only 7 square miles in total. Few options for appropriate-sized schools will ever become available, though the Town has contacted over the years every large institution that might become available. The “Major Parcel Study” is just the latest iteration of that effort.

Newbury College is a “Chance in a Hundred Years” as one Town Meeting Member rightly said. We must seize it. And despite claims about the inadequacy of the buildings, some are new or newer additions, and can be retrofitted relatively easily, as least as easily as some of the leased spaces have been.

Abutters have publicly stated they are happy to have the space purchased for public use, and one specifically citing the desire for a school.

Finally, Newbury is next to the newly funded and finished Reservoir, idyllic play area, and has adequate parking spaces on the property. It would seem that all the “check boxes” needed to place an elementary school there are checked.

Only the political will of Town Meeting remains.