

Advisory Committee – Warrant Article Questionnaire - Instructions
2022

Thanks for submitting a warrant article to Town Meeting. The Advisory Committee (the “AC”) assigns all articles to a subcommittee, which holds a public hearing that you should plan on attending. The subcommittee chair or a designee will work with you to set a mutually convenient date, within the confines of the time the subcommittee has available.

You do not need to make a formal presentation to the subcommittee, but it would be extremely helpful if you would complete the questionnaire below, answering only the questions that are relevant to your article. Please note that completing this questionnaire is discretionary. There is nothing to compel a sponsor under Massachusetts General Laws or the Town Bylaws for anything that is being requested.

Please enter your responses on this form¹ and email it at least three days in advance of the subcommittee hearing to the subcommittee chair and to lpportscher@brooklinema.gov. Providing your responses in advance will make the subcommittee hearing more efficient and quite possibly more satisfactory to all parties. (You may be asked for more detail at the hearing.)

After its hearing, the subcommittee will prepare a report for the AC, and you will be invited to attend a meeting of the Committee. The AC may decide to accept the subcommittee’s report without debate. In that case, the subcommittee’s report will be included in the Combined Reports, a document that is published in advance of Town Meeting and distributed to all Town Meeting Members. Alternatively, the AC may have a full discussion and debate, and then vote on a recommendation.

If that happens, you will be able to respond to questions and make a brief statement just before the full AC votes.

Note that the AC provides only recommendations to Town Meeting, and Town Meeting is not required to accept those recommendations. In addition, you will have an opportunity at Town Meeting to present your case for passing the warrant article.

We strongly recommended that you consult with Town Counsel or the Town Meeting Moderator to ensure that the article you submitted is in proper form, especially if it involves amending the Town’s General Bylaws or Zoning Bylaws. And if it involves Zoning, be sure to consult with the Community Planning & Development Department. Contact information for all parties is available on the Town’s website.

See pages 3-4 of the [Town Meeting Handbook](#), which explains how Town Meeting addresses warrant articles.

Thank you again for engaging in the civic life of the community.

Advisory Committee – Warrant Article Questionnaire
2022

Today's Date	10/9/22
Warrant Article #	39
Article Title	Resolution regarding the study and use of the Golf Course
Petitioner(s)	Leonard Wholey (TMM 11), Jennifer Goldsmith (TMM 11), Cher Duffield (TMM 10), Julie Jette (TMM 16), Wendy Friedman (TMM 5), Anthony Ishak (TMM 1)
Petitioner's email	lwholey@gmail.com , jennifer.k.goldsmith@gmail.com , cher.duffield@gmail.com , juliejette@gmail.com , wafriedman@gmail.com , aishakpharmd@yahoo.com

Not all of these questions apply to all warrant articles. Just answer the ones that do, SAVE the form, ideally with a new file name, and send it back to the chair of the subcommittee charged with vetting your article and to lpportscher@brooklinema.gov. Thank you.

	Question	Responses (Enter N/A for "Not Applicable")
1	Provide the most recent version of the article exactly as it is intended to be voted on by Town Meeting. Please highlight any changes from the version that was originally submitted.	(Attach a separate document with the most recent version.)
2	<p>Goals & Benefits (Briefly, or send a separate file):</p> <p>a. What is the intended policy goal of the proposed Warrant Article?</p> <p>b. Why is this important for the Town?</p> <p>c. Is this something that the Town should do, especially if there are State or Federal resources dedicated to the issue?</p> <p>d. How does the policy goal and the proposed action solve a problem? Does it provide a new benefit, or extend some existing benefit?</p> <p>e. Could Town staff or a Town Board or Committee address the issue effectively without action</p>	<p>a.) The intended policy goal of this Warrant Article is to ensure that the Parks and Recreation Commission is more inclusive as it explores options and creates plans for the 120 acres of open space that is currently the town's municipal golf course. In particular, we aim to encourage exploration of a smaller playing foot-print that would open space for other uses of this land, such as reforestation efforts, a perimeter path, protected bike path, and so forth; uses that better align with town strategic priorities and resident needs.</p> <p>b.) In 2019 the Parks & Rec Commission launched the Parks, Recreation and Open Space 2019 Strategic Master Plan Survey. A posting in the Brookline Tab at the time encouraged residents to participate, stating "A random sampling of residents has been invited to take a survey, and these responses will provide statistically valid results. The results will provide information in determining community values, satisfaction levels, needs and priorities and</p>

by Town Meeting?

demographics for the town’s long-term planning efforts” [bold added]. In this survey participants were asked to rate the importance of 21 activities and town assets to their household; the municipal golf course came in last place in importance amongst this list. The top five items in terms of importance were: parks & playgrounds; trails & pathways; nature sanctuaries; athletic fields; recreation facilities. Given the resident priorities that emerged from this survey, a survey that was purportedly going to be used to inform the strategic planning process, we feel it is important that any planning related to use of this 120 acre property explore all possible ways it might help provide the services that are most important to town residents.

c.) Yes. It might be possible that Brookline can also get state or federal funds to support this issue, depending on what plans are developed (i.e., wetland restoration work). For instance, the Town could apply for a [Wetland Program Development Grant](#) with the EPA. Currently State or Federal resources are not dedicated to the issue.

d.) The policy goal has the potential to solve the problem of providing community resources that are a top priority to residents. Depending on what plans are eventually made, passing this article can have positive impact on the environment (e.g., tree planting, reduction of pesticide use, water conservation), transit (e.g., bike network connectivity), cost-effective use, and/or recreational (walking paths; picnic area) benefits.

e.) During the June 14, 2022 Park and Recreation Commission Meeting, Brookline Recreation Department Director Leigh Jackson stated “there has been some public pressure recently around the golf course and whether it should be a golf course or not.” She stated that from a staff perspective, “it is fair and open for discussion in terms of the politics and town meeting and it’s not for the staff to determine that it’s a golf course.” She further commented that “we just really see it as a beautiful incredible asset to the Community,” and “we are making the best use of it as a golf course that we can, while also putting into plan opening up more to the Community.” Based on this comment, we believe that the topic is relevant to Town Meeting.

3	<p>Does the petitioner, now or in the future, have an equity interest or realize a direct or indirect financial benefit from positive action by Town Meeting?</p> <p>If so, what are those interests or benefits?</p> <p>Please disclose any potential conflict of interest.</p>	No
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	Question	Responses (Enter N/A for “Not Applicable”)
4	<p>General questions:</p> <p>a. Why is the proposed solution workable and effective?</p> <p>b. Is there a financial benefit from the proposed solution?</p> <p>c. Who will benefit and who might not benefit from the proposed action?</p> <p>d. What are the perceived pros and cons, both in the short and long term?</p> <p>e. What research on the topic supports or does not support the proposed article?</p> <p>f. What alternatives to the proposed action were considered?</p>	<p>a. Given that a strategic plan for Putterham Meadows is already underway, now is the time (although earlier would have been better) to view this property through the lens not only of an 18 hole golf course, but through the stated priorities of townspeople expressed in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space 2019 Strategic Master Plan Survey.</p> <p>b. This warrant article does not propose a specific solution. However, based on a survey of a 9-hole course in the area, should an expanded master plan indicate that a 9-hole course would better fit community needs, it could be more profitable than our current 18-hole course. Melinda Spencer - Administrative Manager of Lexington’s Recreation department - noted that the Pine Meadows Golf Club profit “for FY21 was \$1,162,256 - \$516,453 = \$645,803”</p> <p>c. Future beneficiaries would depend upon new future uses, if any are determined.</p> <p>d. Pros would be environmental benefits, if less pesticides are used, or if additional trees are planted; more playing space for more sports, if additional fields are sited; improved transportation if bike or walking paths are added; Local food from a community garden that could benefit those in need such as our Food Pantry. Short term cons would be additional time for staff and volunteers.</p>

		<p>Long term cons are potential reduction of an 18 hole course that may impact tournament play.</p> <p>e. Our research is contained in the description of the article.</p> <p>f. We voiced our concerns about the limited scope of the current Master Plan at multiple Master Plan meetings.</p>
5	<p>Consider the impact on town infrastructure (parking, roadways, parks, etc.); residents; the environment; employers; etc. Are there potential adverse effects from positive action on the article by Town Meeting?</p>	<p>Recreation staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission volunteers would face the frustration of re-visiting a plan that is already 10 months in the making and on which they have spent considerable time.</p>
6	<p>Consider town priorities and allocation of funding. What amount of funding might be required to start and maintain the proposed action? What is the source of those funds? How does the proposed article fit within the operating and/or capital budgets?</p>	<p>According to the December 10, 2019 Park and Recreation Commission Meeting minutes, the “master plan for the golf course and a master plan for the club house total[ed] 120,000.” Creating an updated or new master plan could be a similar amount.</p> <p>Town Meeting in the 2022 Annual Town Meeting approved a Golf Enterprise Fund budget of \$2,580,460 of which \$475K is from retained earnings to support Master Plan work. A portion of either the \$475K Master Plan funds or the Golf Course Enterprise Fund year-end unreserved fund could be used to pay for the updated plan.</p>
7	<p>How does the proposed article and implementation impact the Town administration and staff priorities? Will a department either need to divert staff from an existing program, subcontract the work or add staff?</p>	<p>We believe that an updated plan could be more consistent with both the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan 2020 Update (cost \$100,000) and the Brookline Urban Forest Climate Resiliency Master Plan June 2021 (cost \$150,000)</p> <p>An updated plan would likely require a similar level of effort as the current plan from the Recreation Department Director Leigh Jackson. The work would likely be subcontracted.</p>
8	<p>Who will be responsible for implementing the action that a favorable vote will require? Has the petitioner consulted with those</p>	<p>The Recreation Department and the Parks and Recreation Commission would be responsible for updating the Master Plan.</p>

	participants?	
9	<p>Community Outreach:</p> <p>a.) What steps has the petitioner taken to assure that interested parties were notified and provided an opportunity to participate in the preparation of the proposed article?</p> <p>b.) Are there other Town Boards or Committees that might be consulted?</p> <p>c.) If another board or committee has considered the action of the proposed article, please include a summary of the discussion and outcome.</p>	<p>Len Wholey completed the Golf Course Landscape Master Plan Design survey. His requests for the raw data of the survey answers have not been fulfilled.</p> <p>20 April 2022, Len Wholey made the following comment on the TMMA listserv: "I wonder if certain portions of Putterham would be suited for use as playing fields. For example, the driving range has elevations higher than much of the surrounding area..."</p> <p>9 May 2022, Len Wholey walked the Robert T. Lynch Municipal Golf Course with General Manager, Justin Lawson and Town Meeting Member Richard Nangle.</p> <p>17 May 2022, Len Wholey attended the Golf Course Design Review Committee and asked a question along the lines of "L. Wholey noted that the survey response of nongolfers was only 10%. He is interested in getting more community outreach as to what nongolfers would want in this space."</p> <p>"Golf Course Design Review Committee Meeting Minutes", 17 May 2022 https://www.brooklinema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/33793/5-17-22-Golf-Course-DRC-Minutes-FINAL</p> <p>From Len's notes, he had asked "The recent Brookline Golf Course Survey had an impressive 576 responses, but only 10% of the participants do not play golf. That's less than 60 people in a Town of 60,000. I am interested in learning more about what non-golfers have in mind for this space. Would anyone on this commission be interested in collaborating with me for additional community outreach?"</p> <p>8 May 2022, to perform additional community outreach, Len Wholey created and distributed a survey 120 Acres Survey Results Link. My friend who is an economist was quick to point out that this is not a scientific survey (mainly because there was not a randomized mailing). Please take the results with a grain of salt. For</p>

a more scientific survey about Brookline residents' views about the Brookline municipal golf course, please see [Parks-Open-Space-and-Recreation-Strategic-Master-Plan-2020 \(brooklinema.gov\)](https://www.brooklinema.gov/Parks-Open-Space-and-Recreation-Strategic-Master-Plan-2020)

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space 2019 Strategic Master Plan Survey Final Report starts on page 294 (of 367). Survey questions related to golf can be found on pages 314, 342, 343, 346, and 348.

14 June 2022, Len Wholey attended the Parks and Recreation Commission meeting which included "Golf Course Master Plan DRC Presentation US Open Renovations (In-Kind Construction Projects) Plan-Discussion and Vote". Len made a public comment along the lines of the following: "Leonard Wholey addressed the Commission. He is a town meeting member from Precinct 11. He stated that when Brookline residents were asked about the importance of current offerings in the town, they ranked parks and playgrounds as number one, trails and pathways as number two, nature sanctuaries as number three, and so on. He stated that the municipal 18-hole golf course was ranked 21st. He stated [asked] that in making decisions, such as this one, [has] the Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed documents such as the Parks and Recreation and Open space 2019 Strategic Masterplan survey that contains important information about the wants of Brookline residents." (Park and Recreation Commission Meeting Minutes, 14 June 2022

<https://www.brooklinema.gov/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Minutes/06142022-10807>)

7 July 2022, Len Wholey published a letter to the editor in the Brookline Patch. Wholey, Len, "Letter To The Editor: 120 Acres of Open Space in Brookline" Brookline Patch, 7 July 2022

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/brookline/letter-editor-120-acres-open-space-brookline>

8 July 2022 - TMM Jane Gilman shares on TMM listserv:

Calling your attention to Len Wholley's excellent piece in "Patch". It includes **history** (omitting **herstory**).

<https://patch.com/massachusetts/brookline/letter-editor-120-acres-open-space-brookline>

It begins: On January 26, 1924 - roughly 10 years before the Brookline municipal golf course was born - the Brookline Chronicle noted in an article about a proposed golf course "[the land] was acquired for the purpose of providing a large recreation centre when that part of the town was developed, but has lain idle so far, and it is doubtful if it will be needed for such purpose for some time to come... even should the reservation be later required for playground purposes there would be sufficient area outside the course." Please take the 1 minute survey at the end. Thanks Len

8 August 2022 - Len Wholey sends a draft warrant article to the following parties:
Commissioner of Public Works Eric Chute
Gallentine
Recreation Department Director Leigh Jackson
Office of Town Counsel
Town Moderator Kate Poverman
Advisory Committee Chair Dennis Doughty
Select Board Member Miriam Aschkenasy
State Representative Tommy Vitolo
Town Arborist Tom Brady

17 August 2022 Len Wholey sends a draft warrant article to the following parties:
Town Clerk Ben Kaufman
Golf Course Manager Justin Lawson
Director of Parks and Open Space Alexandra Vecchio

18 August 2022 Len Wholey sends a draft warrant article to the Brookline GreenSpace Alliance

20 August 2022 Len Wholey sends a draft warrant article to Select Board members Heather Hamilton, Bernard Greene, Michael Sandman, and John Van Scoyoc

		<p>31 August 2022 Len Wholey attends Golf Course Landscape Masterplan Design Review Committee Meeting and makes a public comment asking about adding a bike path through the course to improve bicycle network connectivity in Brookline and greatly improve safety.</p> <p>12 September 2022 Recreation Department meets with warrant article petitioners.</p> <p>21 September 2022 Jennifer Goldsmith sends the warrant article to the Women’s Commission and Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Relations members for consideration in their forthcoming meetings.</p> <p>Each petitioner has reached out to their extensive distribution lists of their constituents sharing information about the warrant article and also created a public website summarizing the warrant article sharing widely among constituents.</p> <p>b.) There may be other Town Boards and Committees to include as stakeholders. If identified, we would be happy to speak with them.</p> <p>c.) N/A to our knowledge</p>
10	<p>Prior Articles:</p> <p>a. Do you know whether Town Meeting previously considered any Warrant Articles that address the same or similar topic? If so, do you know what the outcome was?</p> <p>b. How does the proposed article differ from ones that were</p>	<p>a.) This is the first warrant article to our knowledge that deals directly with requesting that the portions of the golf course be considered for other uses.</p> <p>b.) N/A</p> <p>c.) N/A</p>

	<p>previously considered? c. Is there new information or are there new circumstances to support raising an issue that was previously considered by Town Meeting?</p>	
11	<p>Anything else you would like the subcommittee to know?</p>	<p>We believe this warrant article represents an opportunity to think expansively about a community resource. The golf course was designated in the late 1920s and met the needs of the moment. Nearly 100 years later, we must serve the needs of our community. The opposition to this warrant seems to shut down consideration before the conversation begins.</p> <p>The master planning process has so far not included consideration of the prior, extensive, Parks and Recreation survey of town residents about current conservation and recreation needs and desires. That approach short circuited a possible holistic look at all of our assets and needs.</p>