

**Human Services Subcommittee Report  
Warrant Article 21**

**(Create new General By-Law Section 8.xx on innholder license requirements to deter sex trafficking in hotels)**

Public Hearing on March 28, 2023 at 5 p.m. via Zoom.

**Recommendation:** The Subcommittee voted 5-0-0 favorable action on the Article as amended by two friendly amendments.

<b>Executive Summary:</b>	This Warrant Article asks that Article 8 of the Town General By-Laws be amended by adding a new Section 8.xx. This new section, which revises an article submitted for and withdrawn from the Fall 2022 Town Meeting, would impose requirements on hotels to deter sex trafficking at hotels. These requirements are fourfold: 1) Training of certain hotel staff to recognize the signs of sex trafficking; 2) Posting notices in various locations in the hotel to remind workers of their training and obligations; 3) Reporting on when employees are required to enter a guest’s room other than when requested by the guest; and 4) Reporting information to the Select Board or its designee regarding each of the three preceding categories.
<b>Voting Yes will ...</b>	Amend the Town General By-Laws by adding a new section to Article 8 that would require 1) Training of certain hotel staff to recognize that sex trafficking is occurring within their hotel; 2) Posting notices in at least six prominent “back of house” hotel locations to remind workers of their training and obligations; 3) Reporting on when employees are required to enter a guest’s room other than when requested by the guest; and 4) Reporting information to the Select Board or its designee regarding each of the three preceding categories.
<b>Voting No will ...</b>	Make no change to the By-Law
<b>Financial Impact [if any]</b>	None
<b>Legal Implications (if any)</b>	None expressed.

**Recording:**

<https://brooklinema.zoomgov.com/rec/share/ScWeGJTGwCHChSJqxJjFxEp4icof35oa0FwLfo27BZD1nFouTcIZQUSAMoCyBtT.Ib8FbwHiF2tQmEYa> Passcode: None required

**Introduction**

Sex trafficking is a national and international problem. According to Petitioners, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security has an initiative to counter sex trafficking in the hotel industry

(called “Blue Campaign”), as do the American Hotel and Lodging Association, several non-profits (e.g. ECPAT (End Child Prostitution and Trafficking)-USA, and the Polaris Project), and some hotel chains.

States (including Massachusetts) have criminal laws against sex trafficking and also have civil laws that permit victims to recover monetary damages. The Massachusetts Attorney General’s office has a human trafficking division where suspected human trafficking can be reported. Nevertheless, sex trafficking in hotels often goes unnoticed and is not prosecuted, commonly because hotel staff and management are unaware of the signs of possible sex trafficking.

Brookline currently has six hotels that fall within the definition of the proposed Article and subject to licensing by the Town. A seventh, at 30 Webster Place, is on the way. It was this proposed seventh hotel that triggered Petitioners to file Article 32 for the Fall 2022 Town Meeting. They did so because, as proposed, the hotel would be minimally staffed and potentially wide open to abuse by sex traffickers. (The Subcommittee learned during its September 30, 2022, hearing on Article 32, which was subsequently withdrawn, that the zoning and licensing process has largely eliminated these concerns.)

The current Article 21 would impose requirements designed to discourage and deter sex trafficking at hotels. These requirements are fourfold:

- 1) Training of all hotel staff, whether employees or independent contractors, who work 16 or more hours per week, and whose principal work-site is the hotel and whose principal responsibilities involve physical presence with hotel guests and/or physical presence in guest rooms. This training, which must be by a reputable anti-human trafficking entity, must teach the staff to identify signs of sex trafficking and respond appropriately to the signs.
- 2) Posting and maintaining notices in at least six prominent locations in the hotel not usually open to guests (“back of the house” locations). The reason for the notices is to remind staff of the problem and of their training.
- 3) Because training hotel workers will be of limited effectiveness if they cannot observe the condition of guest rooms, the Article requires reporting on when employees are required to enter a guest’s room other than when requested by the guest.
- 4) Reporting information to the Select Board or its designee (and in the case of the notices, to the Police Department as well) regarding each of the three preceding categories.

To Petitioners’ knowledge, Brookline would be the first community in Massachusetts to adopt such an ordinance, as there are no similar laws in Massachusetts - either at the state level or the municipal level. Bills requiring training were introduced in the 2019-2020 and the 2021-2022 state legislative sessions but were not enacted.

Currently, four states mandate training in the hospitality industry, and twenty states have various mandatory signage laws. For a summary, *see* ECPAT-USA, “Unpacking Human Trafficking, A Survey of State Laws Targeting Human Trafficking in the Hospitality Industry,” <https://www.ahla.com/sites/default/files/Unpacking%20Human%20Trafficking-v4.pdf>.

## **Discussion**

The public hearing on March 28, 2023, was attended by the following:

Subcommittee: Susan Granoff, Chair; Katherine Florio; David-Marc Goldstein; Donelle O’Neal Sr.; and Mark Penzel.

Petitioners: Bruce Levin, TMM17; Jonathan Davis, TMM17; Jonathan Margolis, TMM7.

Petitioners had placed Article 32 on the Fall 2022 Town Warrant. Article 32 had also attempted to influence the behavior of hotel operators to act in ways that proactively deterred sex trafficking.

At the hearing on September 30, 2022, no one spoke against the training requirements that were detailed in proposed Article 32. Representatives of Brookline’s Hilton Garden Inn confirmed that they already train their employees system-wide to recognize the signs of potential sex trafficking. They also indicated that in addition to training, they also require key access for elevators (and train staff to be suspicious of anyone asking for more than 2-3 keys) and have 40 cctv cameras. They indicated that they have a significant economic incentive to prevent sex trafficking in their hotels, as no one wants to find themselves the subject of a headline that they are the location of sex traffickers.

However, because of numerous other issues identified by the Police Department, the Subcommittee, and the Town’s local hotels during the Subcommittee’s hearing on September 30, 2022, the Petitioners decided not to move Article 32, either as originally submitted or as amended, and the Subcommittee did not vote.<sup>1</sup>

Petitioners have now returned with Article 21, which addressed all of the key concerns of the various parties, such that there is no expressed opposition from either the Police Department<sup>2</sup> or the hotels.<sup>3</sup> The Brookline Chamber of Commerce, by letter dated April 5, 2023, also indicated its support of the Article.

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<sup>1</sup> These issues included concerns that the posting of notices in public areas of the hotel and the mandatory reporting of room checks to the Select Board would drive legitimate hotel traffic to hotels in neighboring communities, where such notices and reporting were not required.

<sup>2</sup> Petitioners contacted the Police Department, which emailed them via Chief Jennifer Paster, that the BPD had no objections to the Article. Town Counsel’s office also expressed to Petitioners that it also had no problems with the Article.

<sup>3</sup> Paul Saner of EDAB emailed the chair of the Subcommittee on March 22 that “EDAB will not be hearing this. Staff and co-chairs have heard from most of the hotels in Town that the requirements of this article are not a concern to them. Hotels already conduct training of their own accord and signage in employee spaces will not affect

No one at the hearing disputed the significance of sex trafficking as a national issue. Nonetheless, there was no evidence that sex trafficking, defined as “commercial sex induced by force, fraud and/or coercion, and also ... commercial sex by a minor for the financial benefit of another person, regardless of how induced,” is a problem in Brookline hotels. It was argued that we also just don’t know. However, a single anecdote of the recent use of a local hotel by prostitutes and the robbery of a “John” was presented.

In the apparent absence of a current problem, Petitioners argued that the proposed article is meant to both deter the development of sex trafficking at the hotels and help expose it, should it develop. Although the proposed bylaw does not require that the Select Board take any action based on the information, Petitioners hope that the reports to the Select Board required under the new bylaw will be one of the factors that the Select Board will consider when deciding on whether to renew an Innkeeper’s annual license.

This bylaw should not require any additional staff time by the Police Department because it already periodically inspects all hotels for compliance with other legal signage posting requirements.

The two amendments offered to the current Article 21 concerned 1) the number of notices a hotel must post; and 2) the privacy of employee names and data.

#### Amendment #1

As originally written, Article 15 required the posting of anti-sex trafficking notices “in all locations where Employees are typically present but where the Hotel discourages or prohibits guests from entering....” The Subcommittee believed this unlimited number was both excessive and would tend to trivialize the message. The Subcommittee voted unanimously to limit the number “to at least six.” Petitioners agreed to this amendment.

Therefore, this language amended the first sentence of para. 8.XX.3 as follows (deletions marked with ~~strikeout~~, additions in **bold**):

Each Innholder shall cause anti-sex trafficking notices to be ~~prominently~~ posted and continually maintained in its Hotel in ~~all~~ **at least six prominent** locations where Employees are typically present but where the Hotel discourages or prohibits guests from entering – for example, staff locker rooms, staff lounges, staff snack rooms, staff lavatories, Hotel linen laundries, administrative offices, and supply rooms.

#### Amendment #2

As originally written, Article 15 also required that, among other things, the hotel provide the Select Board or its designee with “a true and complete list of all Employees” who received and did not receive the required training. To protect against the public disclosure of employee names,

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guests/customers. The concerns raised prior to the last Town Meeting are moot and we believe the hotels have no objections.”

the Subcommittee voted unanimously to replace this language with the requirement that only the number of employees who did and did not receive the training be reported.

Therefore, this language amended the last sentence of para. 8.XX.2 as follows (deletions marked with ~~strikeout~~, additions in **bold**):

In the case of an Innholder that, at the time of a license application, already holds an in-force license for the same Hotel, which license was issued after enactment of this Article 8.XX, the Innholder shall provide the Select Board or its designee with ~~a true and complete list~~ **the number** of all Employees as hereabove defined who received the training since the issue of the current license and the job titles or job descriptions of such Employees, the identity of the training agency, organization or entity, a brief description of the training, the date or dates of such training, and, also, ~~a true and complete list~~ **the number** of all Employees as hereabove defined, and their job titles or job descriptions, who did not receive the training.

“Scrivener’s error”

The Subcommittee also noted what it believed to be a scrivener’s error in the third sentence of para 8.XX.3. With the exception of this sentence, whenever information is required to be reported to the Select Board, the information is reported to “the Select Board or its designee.” Therefore, the Subcommittee believed that, to avoid confusion, this third sentence should be corrected to include a similar reference to “or its designee.” Petitioners did not disagree.

Therefore, this language corrected this third sentence of para. 8.XX.3 as follows (addition in **bold**):

Each Innholder shall provide the Select Board (**or its designee**) and the Police Department with a true copy of the notice or notices to be posted and a list of all locations where such posting occurs.

**Recommendation**

The Human Services Subcommittee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on Warrant Article 21, as amended, by a vote of 5-0-0

*Roll Call Vote:*

Yes: Florio, Goldstein, Granoff, O’Neal, Penzel

Abstentions: 0

Absent: 0

A copy of the amended article is appended.

To see if the Town will amend the Town General By-Laws by adding the following at the end of Article 8 as follows:

8.XX.1 As used in this section 8.XX the term “Hotel” means a hotel as defined in the Zoning By-Law, section 2.08(5). The term “Hotel” also means a limited service hotel as defined in the Zoning By-Law, section 2.12(1). As used in this section 8.XX, the term “sex trafficking” means commercial sex induced by force, fraud and/or coercion, and also means commercial sex by a minor for the financial benefit of another person, regardless of how induced. As used in this section 8.XX, the term “Employee” means (a) any employee of the Innholder who works at least 16 hours in any week provided that such employee’s principal work-site is the Hotel for which the license is issued and provided further that such employee’s principal responsibilities involve physical presence with Hotel guests and/or physical presence in Hotel guest rooms, (b) any employee of a third party, which employee, if employed by the Innholder, would be described in (a), above, and (c) any individual who is an independent contractor who, if the individual were employed by the Innholder, would be described in (a), above.

8.XX.2 The Innholder of a Hotel shall provide each of its Employees as hereabove defined with training to identify signs of possible sex trafficking in the Hotel and how to respond appropriately when such signs are observed. Such training shall be provided by a reputable anti-human trafficking entity, whether an agency of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts or of the United States, a not-for-profit organization, or a for profit entity (including, by way of example and not as a limitation, a national hotel brand). Training shall not be at any cost, expense, or reduction in wages or other compensation to any Employee. In the case of an Innholder that, at the time of a license application, already holds an in-force license for the same Hotel, which license was issued after enactment of this Article 8.XX, the Innholder shall provide the Select Board or its designee the number of all Employees as hereabove defined who received the training since the issue of the current license and the job titles or job descriptions of such Employees, the identity of the training agency, organization or entity, a brief description of the training, the date or dates of such training, and, also, the number of all Employees as hereabove defined, and their job titles or job descriptions, who did not receive the training.

8.XX.3 Each Innholder shall cause anti-sex trafficking notices to be posted and continually maintained in its Hotel in at least six prominent locations where Employees are typically present but where the Hotel discourages or prohibits guests from entering – for example, staff locker rooms, staff lounges, staff snack rooms, staff lavatories, Hotel linen laundries, administrative offices, and supply rooms. The notices may be such as are provided by an anti-human trafficking agency, organization or entity that provides training as set forth in subsection 8.XX.2, whether or not the agency, organization or entity has provided training to the Employees. Each Innholder shall provide the Select Board (or its designee) and the Police Department with a true copy of the notice or notices to be posted and a list of all locations where such posting occurs. The Police Department may, at any reasonable time when the Hotel is open for business, enter the Hotel to examine the posting and maintenance of such notices and shall report concerns about insufficient posting and maintenance to the Innholder and to the Select Board or its designee.

8.XX.4 In the case of an Innholder that, at the time of a license application, already holds an in-force license for the same Hotel, which in-force license was issued after enactment of this

section 8.XX, the Innholder shall provide the Select Board or its designee with a true and complete report of when Employees are required to physically enter guest rooms other than to render service requested by a room occupant, and when Employees are required to look into guest rooms from an open doorway other than to respond to a request by a room occupant.

8.XX.5 This section 8.XX shall take effect upon enactment.

8.XX.6(a) No provision of this By-Law shall apply where prohibited or preempted by state or federal law.

(b) If any provision of this By-Law, or the application thereof to any person or circumstances, is declared invalid, that invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of this By-Law which can be given effect without the invalid provisions or application, and to this end the provisions of this By-Law are severable.

Or act on anything relative thereto.