

ADVISORY COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION

**Recommendation:** FAVORABLE ACTION on Warrant Article 10 by a vote of 19-1-0.

<b>Executive Summary:</b>	<p>A growing number of Warrant Articles are being filed by multiple petitioners. Listing co-petitioners without identifying a lead and relevant contact information places a burden on Boards, Committees and Commissions, and Town staff with respect to scheduling and conducting hearings and meetings. These delays can have a ripple effect and impact the timely inclusion of reports of Advisory and relevant bodies in the Combined Reports. This then causes TMMs (and the interested public) to have to wait for the supplemental reports, reducing the time TMMs have to review relevant material and potentially compromising their ability to prepare for Town Meeting.</p> <p>Article 10 would require the identification of a single point of contact to simplify the ministerial processes described above and to ease the burden on staff, boards and commissions. It does not prevent or limit the inclusion or identification of or collaboration with co-sponsors or co-petitioners. The Advisory Committee concurred with the petitioner's views and voted to favorably recommend the proposed By-Law change.</p>
<b>Voting Yes will...</b>	Amend the Bylaws to require voter-initiated petition articles to identify a Lead Petitioner and their contact information. Such Lead Petitioner shall be a registered voter of the Town of Brookline.
<b>Voting No will...</b>	Cause no change to the Bylaws.
<b>Financial impact</b>	None foreseen.
<b>Legal implications</b>	None identified.

**Introduction**

When there are multiple petitioners listed on a warrant article it can present organizational challenges for staff and the boards and commissions that are responsible for vetting the articles via the public hearing/meeting process. Delays in identifying the lead petitioner can result in multiple delays throughout the rather compressed (10) week period between the filing of the Warrant and Town Meeting. This impacts the ability of staff and boards and commissions who are responsible for writing reports to get such reports into the Combined Reports for Town Meeting Members to read and absorb prior to Town Meeting. What often happens instead is a Combined Report that says the recommendations of certain boards and commissions will be

supplied in supplemental reports which often are not available until just days before Town Meeting.

WA 10 proposes to amend the By-Law to both add certain definitions and to require the identification of a single point of contact to simplify the ministerial processes described above and to ease the burden on staff. It does not prevent or limit the inclusion or identification of or collaboration with co-sponsors or co-petitioners.

### **Discussion**

There was general agreement that the proposal could help streamline the vetting process and that such an outcome would be beneficial for everyone. There were a couple of questions asked by members of the committee that were answered by the petitioner. These included a question about penalties if someone refused to comply with the By-Law (none), if the intended result could be accomplished with codifying it into the By-Law, perhaps by having the identification and contact information requested when the petition is accepted by the 6<sup>th</sup> floor (possibly).

It was also explained that only registered voters could offer Petition Articles.

### **Recommendation**

By a vote of 19-1 with no abstentions, the Advisory Committee recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on the following motion under Article 10.

VOTED: That the Town amend Section 2.1.13 of the General By-Laws (language to be added in **bold underline**):

#### SECTION 2.1.13 PETITION ARTICLES

**(a) Definitions: Voter Initiated Petition - The petition of voters in the Town requesting insertion of a subject in the warrant for an annual town meeting pursuant to M.G.L. c. 39, s. 10, or special town meeting. Lead Petitioner - The registered voter of the Town identified as such on a Voter Initiated Petition.**

**(b) Insertion in the warrant of Voter Initiated Petitions:** The Select Board shall insert in the warrant for every special town meeting all subjects the insertion of which shall be requested of them in writing by ten (10) or more registered voters in the Town.

**(c) For administrative purposes, each Voter Initiated Petition shall identify a single Lead Petitioner, and shall include such Lead Petitioner's relevant contact information.**

**(d) Failure to comply with the provisions of subsection (c) shall not relieve the Select Board from inserting in the warrant a subject otherwise meeting the criteria for such insertion.**

## ARTICLE 10 ADVISORY COMMITTEE VOTES

<b>Article Description</b>	<b>Lead Petitioner</b>
<b>AC recommendation (Favorable Action unless indicated)</b>	<b>19-1-0</b>
Ben Birnbaum	Y
Harry Bohrs	Y
Cliff Brown	Y
Patty Correa	
John Doggett	Y
Katherine Florio	
Harry Friedman *	
David-Marc Goldstein	Y
Neil Gordon	Y
Susan Granoff	Y
Kelly Hardebeck	Y
Amy Hummel	
Anita Johnson	Y
Alisa Jonas	
Janice Kahn	Y
Pam Lodish	Y
Joslin Murphy	N
Donelle O'Neal, Sr.	Y
Linda Olson Pehlke	Y
Markus Penzel	
David Pollak	Y
Stephen Reeders	Y
Carlos Ridruejo	Y
Lee Selwyn	Y
Alok Somani	Y
Carolyn Thall	Y
Christine Westphal	
Dennis Doughty	
* Chairperson does not vote except to break a tie	