

Brookline PAX Recommendations

Annual Town Meeting, May 29, 2007

Art. 7, FY-08 Budget SUPPORT [Rosenthal amendment](#), then support article

Traffic calming – To send a clear message that the will of Town Meeting must be respected regarding the desirability of traffic calming measures in certain areas of the Town, PAX co-chair Marty Rosenthal has introduced an amendment that removes \$50,000 from the DPW budget and puts it back into a separate Special Appropriation where it has been for the past several years.

Privatization concern – DPW Commissioner DiMaio has recently spoken publicly about the possibility of privatizing parts of the DPW, starting with the sanitation workers. The department has had contact with a contractor who would use his own trash pickup crews. PAX supports our Town staff and unions and opposes any privatization at this point. Our own staff is loyal to the Town, working diligently and providing flexibility that the DPW needs when emergencies occur; contractors typically provide poor pay and benefits that are injurious to societal cohesion.

Revenue – We are told of very lean operating budgets, and PAX is especially concerned about shortchanged school programs. We await an explanation from the selectmen of why the parking meter fees and the trash fee were not increased further

Art. 11. Creation of new zoning district: SUPPORT Advisory Committee motion

This article creates a new 3-family (F-1.0) zoning definition allowing up to 3 units per parcel. It rezones approximately 90 properties in three small areas near Coolidge Corner from M-1.0 to F-1.0, and 5 properties on Fuller and Centre from M-1.0 to T-5. It is a slight revision of a similar article on the fall 2006 warrant, and the list of properties is essentially the same as those voted by the selectmen and Advisory Committee at that time. The FAR (and some dimensional limits) have been changed to correspond to those of the current M-1.0 zone. This article is an important step in the preservation of neighborhoods and open space in North Brookline.

The selectmen's motion drops 1-10 Auburn Court, but the AC motion does not. PAX favors the latter, in part because we believe that the proposed list of protected properties is too conservative. We are reluctant to endorse the removal of this property, a possible slippery slope in the wrong direction.

Many North Brookline residents are frustrated that no progress has been made on broadening the list to include a number of additional 2- and 3-family dwellings. As PAX said in its recommendations last fall, "The current proposal is a sensible start, but the continuing planning process ... should eventually add some of the properties which were recommended late in the process for Article 4." We are highly skeptical that the new idea, "form-based zoning," will be helpful in preserving private greenspace in North Brookline.

Art. 16, Higher excise tax on SUVs: SUPPORT PETITIONER'S RESOLUTION

PAX recognizes the serious threat posed by global climate change and the importance of political action at all levels to address this crisis. Two articles in this Warrant address different aspects of the problem: Art. 16 addresses auto emissions, and Art. 18, environmental building practices. Both are important and worthy of support.

Regarding Art. 16, we commend the petitioner for bringing Town Meeting's attention to the major role of American automobiles in the production of greenhouse gases – especially the class of light trucks. The government classifies SUVs as light trucks rather than cars, holding them to a lower fuel efficiency standard. As a result, they emit 43% more global-warming pollution and 47% more air pollution than an average car. Transportation is the fastest-growing sector of global-warming pollution in the nation. And SUVs, mini-vans and other light trucks now make up nearly half of new vehicles sold. Petitioner's proposal is a reasonable step that can be taken by this and other communities.

Art. 17. Increase maximum number of at-large Advisory Comm. members: SUPPORT

This article is a reasonable measure to provide the Moderator with flexibility in appointing AC members with talent and specialized expertise.

Art. 18. Include "green" considerations in Town construction projects: SUPPORT

The Selectmen's Green Technology Committee, created in response to a petitioner's article at last year's Annual Town Meeting, has gracefully crafted a way to ensure that environmental and sustainable factors will be considered in all Town building projects.

Art. 20: Regulation of graffiti: SUPPORT [Rosenthal motion to refer](#)

For the reasons stated at length in our motion to defer, sent to Town Meeting members in the supplementary mailing, we urge referral to the Selectmen's Committee on Graffiti for a revised proposal in the fall.

Art. 21, Restrict use of trans fats: SUPPORT

In restaurants we have little idea what contains artificial trans fats (partially hydrogenated oils) and what doesn't. New York City and Philadelphia have banned artificial them, and the FDA, USDA, and American Heart Association recommend eating the smallest amount possible. PAX commends Anita Johnson for initiating this article.