



Brookline PAX
think globally • act locally

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Marty Rosenthal, Chair; Neil Gordon, Secretary;
Gary Jones, Treasurer; Judith Vanderkay, Assistant Treasurer
Brookline PAX was founded in 1962

Brookline PAX Recommendations **Special Town Meetings, November 19, 2019**

With a lengthy Warrant, we're more concise than usual on less contentious Articles. For more, refer to Combined Reports arguments supporting our recommendations.

Please bring this with you to Town Meeting.

Art 3 Budget Amendments: Favorable Action: Amendments include substantial and important mitigation funding in support of Brookline Village.

Art 4 \$108mm to Reconstruct Driscoll School: Favorable Action: It's time to move forward with renovation and expansion.

Art 6 Select Board Compensation: Favorable Action (but would prefer a more modest premium for the Chair): Serving on the Select Board is an outsized commitment and sacrifice that precludes many from running.

Art 7 Maintain Street Markings (Resolution) **Favorable Action on Main Motion / vote No Action on AC's substitute language:** An important matter of safety and equity for all who ride on our public ways. We prefer the Petitioners' (one, a PAX board member) stronger, perfectly appropriate "shall" language, not the A/C's weaker "encourage."

Art 8 Senior Discount for Water and Sewer Rates (Home Rule Petition): **Favorable Action:** A modest measure to help our Seniors age in place.

Art 9 Real Estate Transfer Tax for Affordable Housing: Favorable Action on Main Motion / No Action on Motion to Refer (Home Rule Petition): Tell Beacon Hill (as we have before) that we need an up-to-2% tax on real estate transfers, to fund critically needed affordable housing.

Art 12 Authorize Solar Power Purchase Agreements: Favorable Action: Allows long-term agreements for third-party installation of solar arrays on our solar-ready Town buildings (thank you, Tommy Vitolo), and purchase by the Town of electricity generated.

Art 13 Permit Installation of Ground Mounted Solar: Favorable Action: Modest solar arrays would be allowed in the same way that a shed might be placed in a side or back yard. This is smart, climate-friendly zoning.

Art 14 Mandate Electric Vehicle Charging in Parking Lots: Favorable Action: This will ensure that our parking facilities are compatible with an electrified-transport future.

Art 15 Change Storefront Parking Requirements from Minimum to Maximum:: Favorable Action: Let's better align commercial parking requirements with travel behavior, in areas well served by public transportation.

Art 16 Moratorium on e-Scooters and Other Micro-mobility Devices: No Action: Retain local control and prevent in-effect banning of an important transportation alternative while trusting Beacon Hill to pass legislation that may never come. We do need better regulation than in the pilot program, and urge our Transportation Board to hold public hearings and adopt rules/regulations.

Art 17 Open Air Parking and Electric Vehicle Charging: Favorable Action: Increase the number of rented parking spaces providing electric vehicle charging, to solve one more piece of the electric vehicle ownership puzzle.

Art 19 Accessory Dwelling Units: Favorable Action: To add a little sorely needed affordable housing, without changing the character of the town or its neighborhoods. It's "smart growth."

Art 20 Micro Dwelling Units in Commercial Districts: Favorable Action: These would add some more diverse, more affordable housing stock, in transit-rich Coolidge Corner.

Art 21 Prohibit Future Fossil Fuel Infrastructure: Favorable Action: Brookline is committed to eliminate its carbon emissions by 2050. To do that, we need to stop installing infrastructure that will frustrate this important goal.

Art 23 Restrict Leaf Blowers to Private Property: Favorable Action on Petitioner's Motion / No Action on the AC Motion: Art 22 is not likely to be moved, due to a promise by our great -- but imminently retiring -- DPW Commissioner. We would have recommended Favorable Action because we don't need gasoline-powered leaf blowers, for a host of valid reasons. Art 23 will at least (mostly) get them off of the sidewalks.

Art 24 Investigative Authority of Diversity Commission: Favorable Action on CTO&S' Motion to Refer to a Moderator's Committee: CDICR is ill-equipped to implement the provisions of the proposed bylaw amendment, and itself has proposed a delay in implementation until 7/1/21. And, these important issues are far broader than this article, as explained by CTO&S. Let a Moderator's Committee improve upon what's being proposed.

Art 25 Ban Using Face Recognition Technology: Favorable Action on Petitioner's Motion; No Action on amendments; and No Action on referral (to our insufficiently privacy-concerned Surveillance Committee): This flawed technology gives the government the power to (imperfectly) track who we are, who we know, where we go, and what we do --a world where people are watched and (imperfectly) identified when they attend a protest, go to worship, visit a doctor, etc.. Worse, the technology is (aside from that 1984-ish privacy nightmare) far from "ready for prime time." It is especially biased, with false positives, against women and those with darker complexions. Let a ban, an ACLU priority, be the default, not the opposite approach! Petitioner has added reasonable exceptions (Comb/Rpt @ 25/11-12) and we can add more later if clearly merited. Chief Lipson wrote in Oct.: "The Department does not currently have or deploy real time face surveillance and does not have software that runs face surveillance comparisons of any of our databases" and "If passed as drafted WA25 will have catastrophic implications for safety in Brookline." Respectfully, we can't reconcile those statements. While we can't have 100% confidence that none of his hypothetical headaches will ever arise, we're not now willing to compromise on massive and obvious privacy and equity issues. We have an excellent, but of course not flawless Brookline Police Department. However, the basic WA25 trade-offs, like the 4th Amendment, were made by our Founders, e.g., Ben Franklin, "They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety." Justice Brandeis later added, in technology's infancy,

“Experience should teach us to be most on our guard to protect liberty when the government's purposes are beneficent...The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well-meaning but without understanding.”

Art 26 Rename CCS for Florida Ruffin Ridley: Favorable Action on Main Motion; No Action on Referral or Substitute Motion to retain the CCS name, or on other names: This is one small but much-needed step toward restorative justice, i.e., a very worthy Brookline woman who's appropriate to correct the fatal flaw of the former name which was associated with one of our nation's two original sins. Reject arguments that “the process” was flawed. The end result is excellent.

Art 27 Rename for Ethel Weiss: No Action and do not abstain: The last name to get a majority wins. Voting no is not a vote against Ethel Weiss, whom many loved. It's a vote for Florida Ruffin Ridley.

Art 28 Rename for Bob Sperber: No Action and do not abstain: Again, voting no is not a vote against Bob Sperber, whom many knew & respected. It's a vote for Florida Ruffin Ridley.

Art 29 Economic Equity Advancement Fund (Resolution): No Recommendation: We strongly support Petitioner's goals, and support equity (economic and otherwise); but we also see many unanswered questions relating to budget and administrative issues, and hope for more study of this idea.

Art 30 Community Engagement Plan: Favorable Action on Motion to Refer: This very well-intentioned but unfunded mandate will distract our already burdened Diversity Officer from his primary mission. Like WA29, it needs a lot more work, which we encourage.

Art 31 Recommendations re: Climate Change (Resolution): Favorable Action: Important, specific and practical suggestions to reduce our reliance on gasoline-powered vehicles.

Art 32 Replace “Chairman” with “Chair”: Favorable Action: One more appropriate step towards gender neutrality in the Town's bylaws. (PAX' Secretary is a co-petitioner)

Art 33 Broaden References in General Bylaws: Favorable Action: References to “resident” and “citizen” are too narrow, where the latter is now “hot-button,” and where the purpose of Town government should be to serve “the public.” Words matter, especially the Town's official words. (Like WA 34, petitioner is PAX' Secretary; and CTO&S has made worthwhile tweaks.)

Art 34 Qualifications to Serve on Town Boards: Favorable Action: The current bylaws desperately need a cleanup so that rational and consistent criteria is used in defining those eligible to serve. (See also Art 33 re: Petitioner & CTOS)

STM3 Art 1 Reduce Hours of Operation for Marijuana Dispensaries: Favorable Action: Shorter operating hours (8PM close, 6PM on Sundays) will bring evening relief to impacted neighborhoods. It's a fair restriction on the dispensaries. NETA has agreed, which we appreciate.

STM3 Art 2 Require Appointment Only Sales for MJ Dispensaries: No Action: We have serious concerns about (i) equity/exclusivity issues of an appointment-only business model, which favors those who are more affluent, tech-savvy, have flexible schedules, and is biased against those whose work, family and personal obligations make precise scheduling difficult; (ii) privacy issues, especially sophisticated government surveillance, for transactions that may violate federal law, and

where for numerous good reasons customers (perhaps especially immigrants) prefer anonymity, which can't be assured if electronic devices are used for appointments; and (iii) despite proponents arguments to the contrary, an inevitable decline in tax/fee revenues, sorely-needed for funding schools, affordable housing, diversity programs, public safety, and more (see e.g., Arts 4, 6, 7, 9, 29 and 30). Brookline voted overwhelmingly to legalize marijuana, ending decades of discriminatory, anti-libertarian laws.

Some Neighborhood issues are surely legitimate and some are surely exaggerated, but all will soon be alleviated by (i) more enforcement, which has already started, (ii) better policies by the Select Board's new Cannabis Committee, (iii) soon-ending construction projects, and (iv) especially numerous (i.e., 14) Boston dispensaries, as well as one in Coolidge Corner and (we hope) 2 more on Comm. Ave. We find downright ludicrous the petitioners' alleged "statistics" asserting that more dispensaries merely creates more demand and no less for Boston area's only current one, NETA. Do TMM's really believe that all (or any) BU & BC students will forever go to NETA, let alone all the other current Boston customers? Finally, for some, not all, who are overly worried about marijuana, please Google 1936's "*Reefer Madness*."

STM3 Art 3 Form Study Committee for Zoning & Policy re: Dispensaries: No Action: We welcome further study and better procedures; but the Select Board has now formed a Cannabis Committee; a new one is surely not needed. We especially oppose a *moratorium* on new licenses, which would preclude the two pending applications on Comm. Ave., (again) seemingly and clearly counterproductive to the petitioners' ostensible "neighborhood protection" concerns, thus (again) suggesting at least a whiff of "*Reefer Madness*."



**Recommendations for
Special Town Meetings,
November 19, 2019**

**Please bring this with you to Town
Meeting.**

DECEMBER 10th TOWN ELECTION

**Debt exclusion ballot question for
the funding of Driscoll school
reconstruction and expansion**

VOTE "YES"