



# Brookline for Everyone's Endorsements for November 2023 Town Meeting

## **Special Town Meeting 4, Article 1 - Select Board's Consensus MBTA-CA Compliant Warrant Article**

- Recommendation: **FAVORABLE ACTION** as filed; NO ACTION on ALL amendments, referrals, or alternatives

## **Article 6 -**

- Recommendation: **FAVORABLE ACTION** on the article as amended

## **Article 8 - Senior Property Tax Work Off Program**

- Recommendation: **FAVORABLE ACTION** on the article

## **Article 11 - Renaming the Community Preservation Community the Community Preservation Act Committee**

- Recommendation: **FAVORABLE ACTION** on the article

## **Article 16 - Home Rule Petition for rent stabilization and tenant eviction protections**

- Recommendation:

**Continue reading on the next page for further explanations for each recommendation.**

**For more information about Brookline for Everyone, check out [www.brooklineforeveryone.com](http://www.brooklineforeveryone.com)**



## **Special Town Meeting 4, WA 1: Select Board's Consensus MBTA-CA Compliant Warrant Article**

Brookline for Everyone believes that abundant and affordable homes are central to achieving Brookline's core values—including our deep commitments to climate sustainability, a thriving local economy, and social equity. In 2021, the Massachusetts legislature passed the MBTA Communities Law, requiring communities like ours to create multi-family zoning districts around transit stations. To comply with the law, those zoning changes must be adopted by December 31, 2023.

This Warrant Article is the meaningful MBTA-CA compliance option that enables Brookline to enhance our walkable, diverse and economically vital neighborhoods on Harvard Street while also creating the opportunity for at least 900 new units of housing at all income levels to be developed. And therefore we recommend **FAVORABLE ACTION as filed; NO ACTION on ALL amendments, referrals, or alternatives.**

In particular, this Warrant Article

- requires that 15% of all new units on Harvard Street be deed-restricted housing affordable to a range of income levels;
- incentivizes ground floor commercial development to maintain and enhance Brookline's main commercial corridor;
- reduces Brookline's fossil fuel footprint by permitting 4 story multi-family development near businesses and transit;
- promotes diversity by fostering opportunities for neighbors at all income levels to know their neighbors;
- uses the Planning Department's study of Harvard Street and the resulting Form Based Codes to provide Brookline with an innovative roadmap to guide changes to our 50-year-old zoning so we can respond to 21st century challenges.

And lastly, by passing this Warrant Article Brookline can begin the process of changing our core zoning codes from expressing 50-year-old exclusionary, fossil-fuel-based suburban ideals to codes that articulate our 21<sup>st</sup> century values of a climate resilient, economically thriving and welcoming community.



## Article 6 -

## Article 8 - Senior Property Tax Work Off Program

The Senior Citizen Property Tax Work-Off Program has been a vital program that allows income-eligible seniors to reduce their property tax burden by volunteering for the town up to 125 hours. Brookline for Everyone supports exploring more creative solutions to help fixed-income seniors remain in the town as their property values increase, and finding new ways to help fixed income residents who rent, while still maintaining the services the town needs. We recommend **FAVORABLE ACTION** on warrant article 8.

## Article 11 - Renaming the Community Preservation Community the Community Preservation Act Committee

Brookline for Everyone remains excited about the potential that the funds raised by Brookline's adoption of the Community Preservation Act has for the development of housing for low- and moderate-income residents in Brookline, and strongly supports the vital work that the committee has undertaken since their inception. While a relatively minor semantic change, inserting "Act" into the official title of the committee responsible for recommending the how Brookline should use these newfound funds is a valuable change; and we recommend **FAVORABLE ACTION** on warrant article 11.



## **Article 16 - Home Rule Petition for rent stabilization and tenant eviction protections**

As the last few years have shown us, an imbalance between housing supply and demand has led to a skyrocketing of rental and home ownership costs throughout the Boston Metro Area. With the [rental vacancy rate at less than 6%](#), landlords are more likely to [discriminate among would be renters](#), arbitrarily raise rental rates even for long-term residents, and evict “less desirable” tenants. We applaud the petitioners for highlighting the very real problems our housing shortage is causing, for renters across the income spectrum but especially low-income renters. Rent stabilization can be an important tool in the toolbox to help current residents stay in their homes.

The details of a rent stabilization plan are crucial to balancing the precarity many renters in Brookline, and the Boston region, face with the reality that rent control can pit long-time residents against newcomers, reduce mobility, and disincentivize much needed new construction. Much like a local option real estate transfer fee and the recent fossil free fuel construction regulations, needed but nuanced policy options are best developed in partnership across communities to create effective, flexible, state level local opt-in tools. A Brookline-specific home rule petition short circuits these efforts. We encourage our local leaders and activists to continue engaging on rent stabilization local option efforts at the state level, as part of a broader housing strategy to address our regional housing affordability concerns.