



Article 11 – Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) Recommendations

- Recommendation: NO ACTION on dividing the question, **FAVORABLE ACTION** on all CPA Committee recommendations as proposed in the article as filed

Article 12 – Senior Tax Work-Off

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

Article 13 – Accessory Dwelling Unit Zoning By-Law Change

- Recommendation: **FAVORABLE ACTION** on the main motion

Article 14 – Reducing Zoning Barriers to Electrification

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

Continue reading on the next pages for further explanations of each recommendation.

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Article 11 – Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) Recommendations

Brookline adopted the Community Preservation Act (CPA) in May 2021. Revenue is generated through a 1% local property tax and a variable match from the State Community Preservation Trust Fund. Funding for individual projects requires a recommendation from the Community Preservation Act Committee (CPAC) and approval by Town Meeting.

- For the 2024 Spring Town Meeting, CPAC has recommended Town Meeting approval for \$7,931,765 for 11 projects (out of the 16 submitted). Proposed funding includes \$6,441,535 for Community Housing (including two allocations to the Brookline Housing Authority and three for the Brookline Community Development Corporation), \$915,100 for Historic Preservation, and \$575,130 for Open Space and Recreation.

We have been following the CPA Committee’s work closely and thank the members for their good work this year reviewing and evaluating the applications based on Brookline’s Community Preservation Plan and the individual merit of the applications. We are especially excited about the allocation of \$3,750,000 (to match an equal amount allocated by the Housing Advisory Board) for the BHA’s Phase I redevelopment of the Walnut/High Apartments, includes the demolition of 32 outdated units and new construction of approximately 100 new units for low-income (under 50% AMI) households. We are also pleased with allocations (totaling \$1,969,160) to BCDC for critical capital upgrades to their affordable buildings on Beacon Street and Boylston Street, and \$232,375 for a Housing Assistance Program to provide counseling, support (and in extreme cases) financial assistance to help households avoid eviction and stabilize their tenancies.

We strongly encourage all Town Meeting Members to vote **NO ACTION** on dividing the question, and **FAVORABLE ACTION** on all CPA Committee recommendations as proposed in Warrant Article 11.

Article 12 – Senior Tax Work-Off

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 recognizes the financial challenges that some of the senior homeowners in Brookline face and appreciate that the state chose to expand the maximum real estate tax reduction from \$1,875 to \$2,000 annually, and support increasing Brookline’s maximum reduction as well. We encourage the Town to continue exploring 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 12.



Article 13 – Accessory Dwelling Unit Zoning By-Law Change

Brookline for Everyone supports the proposal by the Housing Advisory Board (HAB) to encourage more Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) — also known as granny flats, accessory apartments, or in-law suites — in single family homes. ADUs diversify Brookline’s housing supply by offering non-subsidized units that are generally less costly to produce and more affordable than similar units, while providing flexibility for families, and in particular older adults, to be able to stay in their homes. Due to the limitations in Brookline’s current ADU by-law, first adopted in 2019, only two or three ADUs have been registered. Organizations including the American Planning Association, AARP, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, and many others have called for removing barriers to ADU production, and we commend the HAB for taking up this call with a commonsense proposal to reform the ADU by-law.

The HAB proposal includes a provision supported by the Planning Board allowing a builder to include an ADU in a renovated or new single-family home. It is likely to create additional ADUs for homeowner occupants without significantly changing the neighborhood. The Advisory Council (AC) amendment would remove this option by prohibiting non-occupant owners of a single-family home from creating an ADU— or from renting out an existing ADU, even if the owners have merely moved out for personal or family reasons.

Whether the AC amendment is adopted or not, some single-family homes will continue to be renovated or rebuilt by developers or builders. Whatever one thinks about these rebuilds, when they occur it would be preferable if they at least include an ADU. Since owner-occupied single-family homes in Brookline are far more valuable than rental homes (as confirmed by the Assessor), a builder would be highly motivated to resell to a new owner-occupant rather than remain as an absentee landlord.

The HAB proposal adds a further disincentive for would-be investor-landlords. If a builder creating an ADU fails to sell to an owner-occupant within 24 months, the new ADU would be deed restricted at 80% of AMI for 15 years, significantly reducing its value.

All of the other provisions of the HAB Warrant Article have been supported by all relevant boards, including the Advisory Committee and Select Board. These changes include increases in as-of-right ADU square footages; relaxation of owner-occupancy documentation requirements; and the elimination of prohibitions on street-facing entrances, a separate mailing address, a street-facing mailbox or mail slot, and separate utility meters. The Warrant Article also eliminates the existing five-year “look-back” restriction, which has unnecessarily prevented new or recent home buyers from creating an ADU even if they fully intend to continue living in their home.

We urge Town Meeting Members to vote **FAVORABLE ACTION** on the main motion.



Article 14 – Reducing Zoning Barriers to Electrification

Brookline for Everyone thanks the Zero Emissions Advisory Board for advancing policies to allow existing buildings and cars to move off fossil fuels and to be powered by electricity. This is an integral climate solution for Brookline to achieve net zero admissions by 2040, which B4E strongly supports. Our current zoning does not allow our densest areas to easily have outdoor condensers of heat pumps despite having adequate space.

WA 14 updates our zoning by-law to allow for the installation of heat pumps and electric vehicle chargers within two feet of side and rear lot lines in buildings of six or fewer units, without the need to apply for a Special Permit.

Currently, condensers are not permitted to be installed within 6 feet of any side or rear lot lines without a Special Permit. While special Permits are usually approved, this lengthy and expensive process is an inequitable, and unnecessary, hurdle on our path toward a fossil free future. Modern heat pumps are quieter than traditional heating equipment, and the Town's noise by-law applies to address concerns of neighborly nuisances. This proposal has been supported by multiple boards and commissions, including the Advisory Council of Public Health, the Advisory Committee, and the Select Board.

We ask that that Town Meeting Members vote FAVORABLE ACTION on Warrant Article 14.