



Warrant Article Endorsements for November 2024 Special Town Meeting

Article 7 – Zoning By-Law to Restrict Height to 2.5 Stories in Select Districts

- Recommendation: **NO ACTION** on any referral motions, No Recommendation on the Main Motion

Article 8 – Zoning By-Law Change to Allow for Special Permits for Single Family Home Conversions to Two-Family Homes if Minimum Lot Size Requirements Need to be Waived

- Recommendation: **NO ACTION** on any referral motion, **FAVORABLE ACTION** on the article

Article 9 – Allow a Third Home in T (Two-Family) Districts

- Recommendation: **NO ACTION** on any referral motions or amendments, **FAVORABLE ACTION** on the main motion

Article 10 and 11 – Minor Adjustments the Harvard Street Design Standards

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

Article 14 – Zoning By-Law Change to Allow Separate Ownership of Buildings on the Same Lot

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

Article 15 – Updating the Town’s Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Regulations to Comply with State Requirements in the Affordable Homes Act

- Recommendation: **FAVORABLE ACTION** on the Substitute Motion

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

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Warrant Article 7 - Zoning By-Law to Restrict Height to 2.5 Stories in Select Districts

Warrant Article 7 is an article from the Planning Department that aims to apply a 2.5-story height cap to single- and two-family districts across Brookline, intended to deter demolitions and encourage adaptive reuse. Some on the B4E board view this as effectively a downzoning, while others view this as complementary if passed in addition to WA9 (see below). WA7 does, however, fall in the category of nuanced zoning changes that should not be referred to the Comprehensive Planning Committee. For this reason, Brookline for Everyone recommends **NO ACTION on any potential referral** and makes No Recommendation on the main motion.

Warrant Article 8 - Allow for Special Permits for Single Family Home Conversions to Two-Family Homes if Minimum Lot Size Requirements Need to be Waived

Warrant Article 8 offers a small tweak to the zoning code which would allow conversions of existing structures in T (two-family) and SC (single-family and converted for two-family) zones from single-family to two-family even if they are on small lots or add units in an existing structure on a small lot in an F (three-family) or M (apartment house) district. The additional units would only be possible after review by the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Appeals and the issuance of a special permit. Additionally, there are only around 150 single-family homes impacted by this new allowance. This is an easy tweak to support, as it allows homeowners more possibilities for their properties, the potential for badly needed additional homes of modest size, and any concerns of unintended consequences are moot due to the required special permit. Article 8 has been endorsed by the Planning Board, and Brookline for Everyone recommends **NO ACTION on referral, and FAVORABLE ACTION on the main motion for Warrant Article 8.**



Warrant Article 9 - Allow a Third Home in T (Two-Family) Districts

Article 9 simply changes the use tables to allow a third home to be built by right in Brookline's T (two-family) districts. Other than that, nothing else changes. The size of the buildable envelope remains intact, and the need for special permits and design review does not change.

Because most T district homes are owner occupied, Warrant Article 9 would benefit current homeowners by unlocking the option to add an apartment to rent for additional income, or to sell as a condo to reduce their mortgage. They could create an accessible unit so they could age in place, or build an independent apartment for their adult children, a home health aide, a nanny, or for their aging parents.

Our community would also benefit by allowing smaller, less expensive units whenever an older building is renovated or replaced, adding more diverse home types and sizes for every stage of life. And, because 94% of our T districts are in the Transit Parking Overlay District, there would be more customers living near our commercial districts. Read the full explanation and review FAQs [here](#).

Article 9 implements already established Town priorities. In the past three years, permitting a third unit in T districts for more housing was a recommendation passed by Town Meeting in 2022, WA12; included in the Housing Production Plan approved last year; and recommended by the Planning Board this year. During the past two months, five Town boards and committees have vetted Article 9 with public hearings, with the Planning Board, the Housing Advisory Board and the Advisory Committee on Public Health each voting Favorable Action.

The Advisory Committee and the Select Board voted to refer the subject matter of WA9 to the Comprehensive Planning Steering Committee. The Comprehensive Planning Steering Committee has only just begun developing our Vision for future land use and will continue this work for at least two years. It will then take some years to develop specific land use regulations that reflect that Vision after the Comprehensive Plan is finalized. The option to add more homes proposed in Article 9 should not be buried in this process.

Because zoning changes take time to translate into new housing, the urgent need for new housing requires Town Meeting to act now.

Brookline for Everyone recommends **NO ACTION** on any potential referral or any amendments, and **FAVORABLE ACTION** on the main motion for Warrant Article 9.



Warrant Articles 10 and 11 - Minor Adjustments the Harvard Street Design Standards

Both Warrant Article 10, submitted by the Planning Department, and Warrant Article 11, submitted by the Planning Board, are modest improvements to the Harvard Street Corridor Form Based Zoning adopted at the Fall 2023 Town Meeting. WA10 amends the list of materials that can be used in new buildings in the district, and WA11 gives the Planning Board -- comprised primarily of experienced architects -- additional discretion to approve materials and designs that are consistent with the overall intent of the district, and to allow for new developments in available building materials, especially ones that increase climate sustainability, rather than going through an elaborate amendment process year after year. Brookline for Everyone recommends **FAVORABLE ACTION on both Warrant Article 10 and 11**, which we believe will help implement the intent of the Harvard Street rezoning to help create more housing and more commercial development along the corridor.

Warrant Article 14 - Zoning By-Law Change to Allow Separate Ownership of Buildings on the Same Lot

Article 14 proposes a very specific change applying only to a small number of lots in Multifamily (M-1.0) Zoning Districts with more than one residential building. The current rules on required minimum separation between those buildings offer more flexibility to rental buildings than to condos. The proposed change would extend the same provisions to condos. This could encourage owners to add condo units on their lots, where space permits. For example, they might add a small one-story, accessible residential building in the rear, enabling them to age in place. Brookline for Everyone recommends **FAVORABLE ACTION on Warrant Article 14**.



Warrant Article 15 - Updating the Town's Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Regulations to Comply with State Requirements in the Affordable Homes Act

Brookline for Everyone supports the “Substitute Motion” advanced by the Select Board on WA 15 to expand the ability to add Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) to single family homes in Brookline. Town Meeting approved the first ADU Zoning Article in 2019 and, by a near-unanimous vote at its 2024 Annual Meeting, adopted a more expansive and user-friendly ADU zoning measure. Article 15 adds further provisions encouraging ADUs, consistent with the Commonwealth's Affordable Housing Act (AHA) passed in August 2024, which requires that municipalities confirm their laws no later than February 2025.

The primary changes mandated by the AHA (and now proposed for Brookline in Article 15) include eliminating the “owner-occupancy” requirement for homes with ADUs, making it clear that the ADU provisions apply to all single-family homes (whether not they are in a “single family zoning district”), and provisions making it easier to create detached ADUs on the same lot.

We believe that expanding access to ADUs for single-family homeowners is an important part of a multi-pronged housing strategy for Brookline, which also includes approving Warrant Articles 8 and 9 (see our separate endorsements of those articles). Like WAs 8 and 9, WA 15 will provide flexibility for families as their needs change over time and, in particular, provide options for older adults to be able to stay in their homes, and for households with persons with disabilities. More access to ADUs will also increase the diversity of housing choices in the Town, provide a non-subsidized form of housing that is generally less costly, and has the potential to add housing units to Brookline's total housing stock while blending in with existing neighborhoods. This measure is good housing policy which will advance Brookline's housing production goals, while meeting the life cycle and aging-in-place needs of many Brookline residents.

Brookline for Everyone recommends FAVORABLE ACTION on Warrant Article 15 as set forth in the Substitute Motion.